# CHEERFUL YESTERDAYS

BY

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

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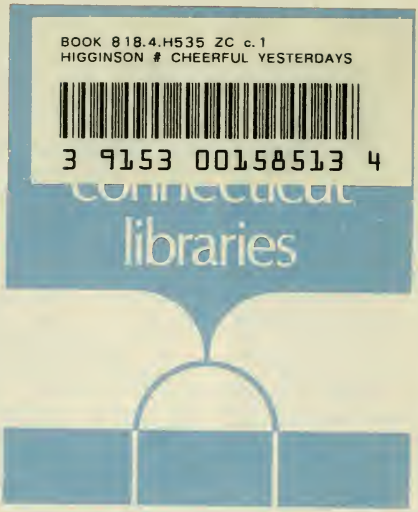


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THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

"A man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
And confident to-morrows."
WORDSWORTH, *Excursion*, Book VII.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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TO MY WIFE

MARY THACHER HIGGINSON

WHOSE SUNNY INFLUENCE ADDS APPROPRIATENESS TO THE TITLE, ADOPTED AT HER SUGGESTION, OF THIS BOOK OF REMINISCENCES

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., *February* 12, 1898

## NOTE

The chapters of this book have appeared at short intervals in the "Atlantic Monthly" and are here reprinted with careful revision and with a few additions. Some of the latter are taken from a sketch of the author's mother, published originally in the "Ladies' Home Journal." These are here included by permission of the proprietors of that periodical.

# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | A CAMBRIDGE BOYHOOD | 1 |
| II. | A CHILD OF THE COLLEGE | 38 |
| III. | THE PERIOD OF THE NEWNESS | 69 |
| IV. | THE REARING OF A REFORMER | 100 |
| V. | THE FUGITIVE SLAVE EPOCH | 132 |
| VI. | THE BIRTH OF A LITERATURE | 167 |
| VII. | KANSAS AND JOHN BROWN | 196 |
| VIII. | CIVIL WAR | 235 |
| IX. | LITERARY LONDON TWENTY YEARS AGO | 271 |
| X. | LITERARY PARIS TWENTY YEARS AGO | 298 |
| XI. | ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PUBLIC LIFE | 326 |
| | EPILOGUE | 362 |
| | INDEX | 365 |

# CHEERFUL YESTERDAYS

## I

### A CAMBRIDGE BOYHOOD

In introducing the imaginary Chronicles of P. P., Clerk of this Parish, the poet Pope remarks that any such book might well be inscribed, "On the Importance of a Man to Himself." Yet perhaps the first obstacle to be encountered by any autobiographer is the sudden sense of his own extreme unimportance. Does each ant in an ant-hill yearn to bequeath to the universe his personal reminiscences? When, at the dead of night, I hear my neighbors at the Harvard Observatory roll away their lofty shutters, in preparation for their accustomed tryst with the stars, it seems as if one might well be content to keep silence in the presence of the Pleiades. Yet, after all, the telescope need only be reversed to make the universe appear little, and the observer large; so that we may as well begin at the one end as at the other.

"Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him."

Probably, if the truth were known, nothing in the universe is really insignificant, not even ourselves.

When I think of the vast changes which every man of my time has seen, of the men and women whom I have known, — those who created American literature and who freed millions of slaves, — men and women whom, as the worldly-wise Lord Houghton once wrote me, "Europe has learned to honor, and would do well to imitate," then I feel that, whether I will or no, something worth chronicling may be included in the proposed chapters. For the rest, the autobiographer has the least reason of all writers to concern himself about the portrayal of his own personality. He is sure to reveal it, particularly if he tries to hide it. Confucius asked, "How can a man be concealed?" Of all methods, certainly not by writing his reminiscences. He can escape unobserved, or else mislead observers, only by holding his tongue; let him open his lips, and we have him as he is.

All the scenes and atmosphere of one's native village — if one is fortunate enough to have been born in such a locality — lie around the memory like the horizon line, unreachable,

impassable. Even a so-called cosmopolitan man has never seemed to me a very happy being, and a cosmopolitan child is above all things to be pitied. To be identified in early memories with some limited and therefore characteristic region, — that is happiness. No child is old enough to be a citizen of the world. What denationalized Americans hasten to stamp as provincial is for children, at least, a saving grace. You do not call a nest provincial. All this is particularly true of those marked out by temperament for a literary career. The predestined painter or musician needs an early contact with the treasures and traditions of an older world, but literature needs for its material only men, nature, and books ; and of these, the first two are everywhere, and the last are easily transportable, since you can pile the few supreme authors of the world in a little corner of the smallest log cabin. The Cambridge of my boyhood — two or three thousand people — afforded me, it now seems, all that human heart could ask for its elementary training. Those who doubt it might, perchance, have been the gainers if they had shared it. "He despises me," said Ben Jonson, "because I live in an alley. Tell him his soul lives in an alley."

I was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on December 22, 1823, in a house built by my

father at the head of what was then called Professors' Row, and is now Kirkland Street, — the street down which the provincial troops marched to the battle of Bunker Hill, after halting for prayer at the "gambrel-roofed house" where Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes was born. My father's house — now occupied by Mrs. F. L. Batchelder — was begun in 1818, when the land was bought from Harvard College, whose official he had just become. Already the Scientific School and the Hemenway Gymnasium crowd upon it, and the university will doubtless, one of these days, engulf it once more. My father came of a line of Puritan clergymen, officials, militia officers, and latterly East India merchants, all dating back to the Rev. Francis Higginson, who landed at Salem in 1629, in charge of the first large party for the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and who made that historic farewell recorded by Cotton Mather, as his native shores faded away: "We will not say, as the Separatists said, Farewell, Rome! Farewell, Babylon! But we will say, Farewell, dear England! Farewell, the Christian church in England, and all the Christian friends there!"

My father had been, like his father before him, — also named Stephen Higginson, and a member of the Continental Congress in 1783,

— among the leading merchants of Boston, until Jefferson's embargo brought a great change in his fortunes. He had been unsurpassed in those generous philanthropies which have given Boston merchants a permanent reputation; he was, indeed, frequently mentioned — as his cousin, John Lowell, wrote of him — as the Howard or the Man of Ross of his day. I still possess a fine oil painting of this last hero of Pope's lay, a picture sent anonymously to the house, during my father's life, with the inscription that it was for a man who "so eminently Copys the Fair Original." Through inquiries very lately made at Ross in England, I found with surprise that no picture of the original "Man of Ross" remained in the village; and I was led to suspect that this might be one of the two portraits which were once there, but have disappeared. Mine is certainly not that engraved in the "European Magazine" for 1786, but a far more attractive representation. My father retained warm friends in his adversity, who bought for him the land where the Cambridge house stood, and secured for him the position of steward of the college, the post now rechristened "bursar," and one in which he did, as Dr. A. P. Peabody tells us, most of the duties of treasurer. In that capacity he planted, as I have

always been told, a large part of the trees in the college yard, — nobody in Cambridge ever says "campus," — and had also the wisdom to hang a lamp over each entrance to the yard, although these lamps were soon extinguished by the economical college. He was ardently interested in the early Unitarian division, then pending, in the Congregational body; organized the Harvard Divinity School, — not then, as now, undenominational; and seems to have been for some years a sort of lay bishop among the Unitarian parishes, distributing young ministers to vacant churches without fear or favor. He liked to read theology, but was in no respect a scholar; indeed, Dr. Peabody says that, on receiving for the institution its first supply of Hebrew Bibles, my father went to the president, Dr. Kirkland, with some indignation, saying that the books must all be returned, since the careless printer had put all the title-pages at the wrong end. In his adversity as in his wealth, he was a man of boundless and somewhat impetuous kindness, and espoused with such ardor the cause of Miss Hannah Adams, the historian, against her rival in that profession, the Rev. Dr. Morse, that he was betrayed into a share in one or two vehement pamphlets, and very nearly into a lawsuit.

He died when I was nine years old, and my chief training came consequently from my mother and my aunt Miss Anne G. Storrow, then known to all the Cambridge world as "Aunt Nancy," who was to my mother like a second self in the rearing of her children. My mother's early life was like a chapter in a romance. Captain Thomas Storrow, an English officer, being detained a prisoner in Portsmouth during that war, fell in love with a Portsmouth maiden, who adventurously married him at the age of seventeen, in 1777, and sailed with him to England. These were my mother's parents. The marriage had all the requisite elements of romance — youth, inexperience, two warring nations, and two deeply dissatisfied families. The bride, Anne Appleton, represented two of the best families in the then somewhat aristocratic province of New Hampshire, the Appletons and the Wentworths; the latter, in particular, holding their heads so high that they were declared by a wicked Portsmouth wit to speak habitually of Queen Elizabeth as "Cousin Betsy Tudor." This was the nest in which my grandmother had been reared. She had lived from childhood in the house of her grandfather, Judge Wentworth; her great-grandfather was the first of the three royal governors of that name, and the two others were her near kins-

men. She might, indeed, have sat for the heroine of Whittier's ballad, "Amy Wentworth;" but it was a soldier, not a sailor, whom she married; and when she went to England — fortunately under the proper escort of a kinswoman — she was apparently received, both by her husband's relatives and her own, with all the warmth that might have been expected — that is, with none at all. Yet she had sweet and winning qualities which finally triumphed over all obstacles; and her married life, though full of vicissitudes, was, on the whole, happy. They dwelt in England, in Jamaica, in St. Andrews, in Campobello, then in Jamaica again, Captain Storrow having in the meantime resigned his commission, and having died at sea on his passage to Boston, in 1795. My mother, Louisa Storrow, had been born, meanwhile, at St. Andrews, in 1786.

Among my mother's most vivid childish recollections was that of being led, a weeping child of nine, at the stately funeral of her father, who was buried in Boston with military and Masonic honors. After his death his young widow opened a private school in Hingham, Massachusetts, and through the influence of kind friends in Boston, had boarding pupils from that city, only twenty miles away, thus laying for my mother the foundation of some

life-long friendships. This school has been praised by Mr. Barnard, the historian of early American education, as one of the best of the dawning experiments toward the education of girls. Mrs. Storrow, however, died within a year and a half, and her little family were left orphans among strangers or very recent friends. Their chief benefactor was my father, into whose family my mother was adopted, assisting in the care of his invalid wife and two little girls. Nothing could at the time have been less foreseen than the ultimate outcome of this arrangement. My mother was betrothed at fifteen or sixteen to a young man — Edward Cabot — who was lost at sea; a year or two later her benefactress, my father's first wife, died, and my mother remained in the household as an adopted daughter, ultimately becoming, at the early age of nineteen, my father's second wife.

My father was sixteen years older than my mother, and into all his various interests she was at once thrown as the young Lady Bountiful of the household. She also had the care of two stepchildren, who all their lives thought of her as their mother. My father lived in the then fashionable region of Mt. Vernon Street, in all the habits of affluence; his hospitality was inconveniently unbounded, and the young

wife found herself presiding at large dinner-parties and at the sumptuous evening entertainments, then more in vogue than now. It was the recorded verdict of the Hon. George Cabot, the social monarch of that day in Boston, that "no one received company better than Mrs. Higginson," and those who knew the unfailing grace and sweetness of her later manner can well believe it. She had at this time in their freshness certain points of physical beauty which she retained unusually unimpaired until her latest years — a noble forehead, clear blue-gray eyes, a rose-tinted complexion, soft brown hair, a pliant figure, with slender hands and feet.

She had, in all, ten children of her own, of whom I was the youngest. But before my birth the whole scene had suddenly changed. My father's whole fortune went when Jefferson's embargo came; his numerous vessels were captured or valueless. He retired into the country, living on a beautiful sheep-farm in Bolton, Massachusetts, placed at his disposal by a more fortunate friend, Mr. S. V. S. Wilder. There lies before me my mother's diary at this farm, which begins thus: "On Saturday, the 8th April, 1815, we left our home, endeared to us by a long and happy residence and by the society of many dear and kind friends, to make

trial of new scenes, new cares, and new duties; but though by this change we make some sacrifices and have some painful regrets, we are still experiencing the same goodness and mercy which have hitherto crowned our lives with happiness." "I always awake," she adds, "calm and serene. My children occupy my mind and my heart, and fill it with affection and gratitude. They are healthy, innocent, and happy, and I enjoy every moment of their lives. Books are my recreation, and, next to my children, my greatest source of pleasure. I read Stewart's 'Philosophical Essays' and the 'Faerie Queene' of Spenser, usually in the evening, which is charmingly undisturbed. This exemption from visitors is delightful to me; it gives me time to think and to read, and I only hope that I shall improve all my advantages." She was at this time in her thirtieth year, and in this sweet spirit laid down the utmost that the little New England capital could then afford of luxury and fashion.

Another change came soon, when she and her flock were transferred, rather against her will, to Cambridge, and placed in an official position. My father's connection with the college, and the popular qualities of my mother and aunt, brought many guests to our house, including the most cultivated men in Boston as

well as Cambridge. My earliest documentary evidence of existence on this planet is a note to my father, in Edward Everett's exquisite handwriting, inquiring after the health of the "babe," and saying that Mrs. Everett was putting up some tamarinds to accompany the note. The precise object of the tamarinds I have never clearly understood, but it is pleasant to think that I was, at the age of seven months, assisted toward maturity by this benefaction from a man so eminent. Professor Andrews Norton and George Ticknor habitually gave their own writings; and I remember Dr. J. G. Palfrey's bringing to the house a new book, Hawthorne's "Twice-Told Tales," and reading aloud "A Rill from the Town Pump." Once, and once only, Washington Irving came there, while visiting a nephew who had married my cousin. Margaret Fuller, a plain, precocious, overgrown girl, but already credited with unusual talents, used to visit my elder sister, and would sometimes sit on a footstool at my mother's feet, gazing up at her in admiration. A younger sister of Professor Longfellow was a frequent guest, and the young poet himself came, in the dawning of his yet undeveloped fame. My nurse was a certain Rowena Pratt, wife of Dexter Pratt, the "Village Blacksmith" of Longfellow; and it is my impression that she was married from

our house. It is amusing to remember that Professor Longfellow once asked me, many years after, what his hero's name was. My special playmate, Charles Parsons, was a nephew of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was in those years studying in Europe; and in the elder Dr. Holmes's house Charles Parsons and I often "tumbled about in a library," — indeed, in the very same library where the Autocrat had himself performed the process he recommended. Under these circumstances it seems very natural that a child thus moulded should have drifted into a literary career.

The period here described was one when children were taught to read very early, and this in all parts of our country. The celebrated General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, in South Carolina, was reported by his mother in 1745 as "beginning to spell before he is two years old;" but he himself said, later, of this precocious teaching that it was "sad stuff," and that "by haste to make him a clever fellow he had very nearly become a stupid one." My mother made a memorandum in regard to my elder sister, "She knows all her letters at three," and of me that at four I had already "read a good many books." I still preserve a penciled note from a little playmate, the daughter of a professor, saying, "I am glad

you are six years old. I shall be four in March." My own daughter could not have written that note when she was seven, and yet she learned to read and write at that age almost without conscious effort. I cannot see that my contemporaries either gained or lost anything by this precocious instruction ; and perhaps, in the total development of a child's mind, the actual reading of books plays a much smaller part than we imagine. Probably the thing of most importance, even with books, as an experienced Boston teacher once said, is to have been "exposed to them," to have unconsciously received their flavor, as a pan of milk takes the flavor of surrounding viands. To have lain on the hearth-rug and heard one's mother read aloud is a liberal education. When I remember that my mother actually read to us in the evenings every one of the Waverley Novels, even down to "Castle Dangerous," I cannot but regard with pity the children of to-day who have no such privilege.

My father, in his days of affluence, had bought a great many books in London, and had them bound under his own eye in the solid fashion of that day. Many of them were sold in his adversity, yet nearly a thousand volumes remained, chiefly of English literature and history of the eighteenth century ; and most of

these I read. There was a fine set of Dr. Johnson's works in a dozen volumes, with an early edition of Boswell; all of Hoole's Tasso and Ariosto; a charming little edition of the British essayists, with pretty woodcuts; Bewick's Birds and Quadrupeds; Raynal's Indies; the Anti-Jacobin; Plutarch's Lives; Dobson's Life of Petrarch; Marshall's and Bancroft's Lives of Washington; Miss Burney's and Miss Edgeworth's works; and "Sir Charles Grandison." There were many volumes of sermons, which my mother was fond of reading, — she was, I think, the last person who habitually read them, — but which I naturally avoided. There were a good many pretty little Italian books, belonging to one of my elder sisters, and a stray volume of Goethe which had been used by another. In out-of-the-way closets I collected the disused classical textbooks of my elder brothers, and made a little library to be preserved against that magic period when I too should be a "collegian." To these were to be added many delightful volumes of the later English poets, Collins, Goldsmith, Byron, Campbell, and others, given at different times to my aunt by George Ticknor. In some of them — as in Byron's "Giaour" — he had copied additional stanzas, more lately published; this was very fascinating, for it seemed like poetry

in the making. Later, the successive volumes of Jared Sparks's historical biographies — Washington, Franklin, Morris, Ledyard, and the "Library of American Biography"— were all the gift of their kindly author, who had often brought whole parcels of Washington's and Franklin's letters for my mother and aunt to look over. A set of Scott's novels was given to my elder brother by his life-long crony, John Holmes. Besides all this, the family belonged to a book club, — the first, I believe, of the now innumerable book clubs: of this my eldest brother was secretary, and I was permitted to keep, with pride and delight, the account of the books as they came and went. Add to this my mother's love of reading aloud, and it will be seen that there was more danger, for a child thus reared, of excess than of scarcity. Yet as a matter of fact I never had books enough, nor have I ever had to this day.

Seeing the uniform respect with which my mother and aunt and elder sisters were treated by the most cultivated men around us, I cannot remember to have grown up with the slightest feeling that there was any distinction of sex in intellect. Why women did not go to college was a point which did not suggest itself; but one of my sisters studied German with Professor Charles Follen, while another took les-

sons in Latin and Italian from Professor Bachi and in geometry from Professor Benjamin Peirce. I forget where this especial sister studied English, but she wrote for me all the passages that were found worth applauding in my commencement oration. Yet it is a curious fact that I owe indirectly to a single remark made by my mother all the opening of my eyes to the intellectual disadvantages of her sex. There came to Cambridge a very accomplished stranger, Mrs. Rufus King, of Cincinnati, Ohio, — afterward Mrs. Peter, — who established herself there about 1837, directing the college training of a younger brother, two sons, and two nephews. No woman in Cambridge was so highly educated; and once, as she was making some criticisms at our house upon the inequalities between the sexes, my mother exclaimed in her ardent way, "But only think, Mrs. King, what an education you have obtained." "Yes," was the reply, "but how did I obtain it?" Then followed a tale almost as pathetic as that told in Mrs. Somerville's autobiography, of her own early struggles for knowledge. I cannot now recall what she said, but it sank into my heart, at the age of fifteen or thereabouts; and if I have ever done one thing to secure to women better justice in any direction, the first impulse came from that fortunate question and reply.

More important, however, than all this, to my enjoyment, at least, was the musical atmosphere that pervaded the house. My youngest sister was an excellent pianist, — one of the first in this region to play Beethoven. Among the many students who came to the house there were three who played the flute well, and they practiced trios with her accompaniment. One of them was John Dwight, afterwards editor of the "Journal of Music," and long the leading musical critic of Boston; another was Christopher Pearse Cranch, poet and artist; and the third was William Habersham from Savannah, who had a silver flute, of which I remember John Dwight's saying, when it first made its appearance, "It has a silver sound." When I read in later years the experiences of the music-loving boy in "Charles Auchester," it brought back vividly the happiness with which, when sent to bed at eight o'clock, I used to leave the door of my little bedroom ajar, in order that I might go to sleep to music.

Greater still were the joy and triumph when Miss Helen Davis, who was the musical queen of our Cambridge world, came and filled the house with her magnificent voice, singing in the dramatic style then in vogue the highly sentimental songs that rent my childish heart with a touch of romance that happily has never faded

away: "The Breaking Waves Dashed High," "The Outward Bound," "Love Not," "Fairy Bells," "The Evening Gun," and dozens of others, the slightest strain of which brings back to me, after sixty years, every thrill of her voice, every movement of her fine head. Strange power of music, strange gift to be bestowed on one who, when once away from the piano, was simply a hearty, good-natured woman, without a trace of inspiration! She was the sister of Lieutenant (afterwards Admiral) Davis, and his fine naval achievements at Port Royal and Memphis seemed only to put into "squadron-strophes" the magnificent triumphs of her song. I still recall the enchantment with which I heard, one moonlit summer night, the fine old glee "To Greece we give our Shining Blades," sung as a serenade under my sister's window, by a quartette consisting of Miss Davis and her brother, of Miss Harriet Mills, who afterwards became his wife, and of William Story. I had never before heard the song, and it made me feel, in Keats's phrase, as if I were going to a tournament.

I went to a woman's school till I was eight; then walked daily, for five years, from the age of eight to that of thirteen, to the private school of William Wells, an institution which was then regarded as being — with the possible

exception of the Boston Latin School — the best place in which to fit for Harvard College, and which was therefore much sought by the best Boston families. Mr. Wells was an Englishman of the old stamp, erect, vigorous, manly, who abhorred a mean or cowardly boy as he did a false quantity. The school was a survival of a type which still lingers, I fancy, in the British provinces, — honest and genuine, mainly physical in its discipline, and somewhat brutal as to its boyish life and ways. Being a day-scholar only, I escaped something of the coarseness and actual demoralization which existed there; and thanks to an elder brother, the strongest boy in the school, I went free of the frequent pommeling visited by the larger boys on the smaller. I will not go so far as my schoolmate, the late Charles C. Perkins, who used simply to say of it, when questioned by his young sons, "My dears, it was hell;" but even as a day-scholar I recall some aspects of it with hearty dislike, and am glad that it was my happy lot to have come no nearer. The evil was, however, tempered by a great deal of wholesome athletic activity, which Mr. Wells encouraged: there was perpetual playing of ball and of fascinating running games; and we were very likely to have an extra half-holiday when skating or coasting was good.

There was no real cruelty in the discipline of the school, — though I have sometimes seen this attributed to it, as in Adams's "Life of Richard Dana," — but Mr. Wells carried always a rattan in his hand, and it descended frequently on back and arm. Being very fond of study and learning easily, I usually escaped the rod; but I can see now that its very presence was somewhat degrading to boyish nature. Mr. Wells taught us absolutely nothing but Latin and Greek, yet these he inculcated most faithfully, and I have heretofore described, in an essay "On an Old Latin Text Book," the joy I took in them. I well remember that on first being promoted to translating English into Greek, I wrote on and on, purely for pleasure, doing the exercises for days in advance. I should add that he taught us to write from copies set by himself in a clear and beautiful handwriting, and that we were supposed to learn something of history by simply reading aloud in class from Russell's "Modern Europe;" this being, after all, not so bad a way. It must not be forgotten that he bestowed a positive boon upon us by producing a Latin grammar of his own, so brief and simple that when I was afterwards called upon to administer to pupils the terrible manual of Andrews and Stoddard, it seemed to me, as indeed it has always since seemed, a burden

too intolerable to be borne. French was taught by his eldest daughter, an excellent woman, though she sometimes had a way of tapping little boys on the head with her thimble; and mathematics we received from a succession of Harvard students, thimbleless. For a time, one fair girl, Mary Story — William Story's sister, and afterwards Mrs. George Ticknor Curtis — glided in to her desk in the corner, that she might recite Virgil with the older class.

But in general the ill effect of a purely masculine world was very manifest in the school, and my lifelong preference for co-education was largely based upon what I saw there. I could not help noticing — and indeed observed the same thing in another boarding-school, where I taught at a later day — the greater refinement, and I may say civilization, of the day-scholars, who played with their sisters at home, as compared with those little exiles who had no such natural companionship. I must not forget one almost romantic aspect of the school in the occasional advent of Spanish boys, usually from Porto Rico, who were as good as dime novels to us, with their dark skins and sonorous names, — Victoriano Rosello, Magin Rigual, Pedro Mangual. They swore superb Spanish oaths, which we naturally borrowed; and they once or twice drew knives upon one another, with

an air which the "Pirates' Own Book" offered nothing to surpass. Nor must I forget that there were also in the school certain traditions, superstitions, even mechanical contrivances, which were not known in the world outside. There were mechanisms of pulleys for keeping the desk-lid raised; the boys made for themselves little two-wheeled trucks to ride upon, and every seat in the school was perforated with two small holes for needles, to be worked by a pulley, for the sudden impaling of a fellow student, or even of the mathematical usher. Enormous myths existed as to what had been done, in the way of rebellion, by the pupils of a previous generation; and the initials of older students still remained carved in vast confusion on the end of the woodshed, like the wall which commemorates Canning and Byron at Harrow. Above all, a literature circulated under the desks, to be read surreptitiously, — such books as those to which Emerson records his gratitude at the Latin School; fortunately nothing pernicious, yet much that was exciting, including little dingy volumes of "Baron Trenck," and "Rinaldo Rinaldini," and "The Three Spaniards," and "The Devil on Two Sticks." Can these be now found at any bookstore, I wonder, or have the boys of the present generation ever heard of them?

But the most important portion of a boy's life is perhaps his outdoor training, since to live out of doors is to be forever in some respects a boy. "Who could be before me, though the palace of the Cæsars crackt and split with emperors, while I, sitting in silence on a cliff of Rhodes, watcht the sun as he swang his golden censer athwart the heavens?" Landor's hero was not happier than my playmate, Charles Parsons, and myself, as we lay under Lowell's willows "at the causey's end," after a day at Mount Auburn, — then Sweet Auburn still, — to sort out our butterflies in summer or divide our walnuts in autumn, while we chanted uproariously the "Hunter's Chorus:" —

> "We roam through the forest and over the mountain;
> No joy of the court or banquet like this."

We always made a pause after the word "court," and supposed ourselves to be hurling defiance at monarchies.

Every boy of active tastes — and mine were eminently such — must become the one thing or the other, either a sportsman or a naturalist; and I have never regretted that it was my lot to become the latter. My fellow townsman, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, describes himself as wandering along our native stream "with reeking sandal and superfluous gun." My sandals suffered, also, but I went with butterfly-net and

tin botanical box. Perhaps these preoccupied me before I yearned after field-sports, or perhaps there was no real yearning. I can remember that as a child I sometimes accompanied an elder brother or cousin to pick up the birds he shot, though he rarely seemed to shoot any; but there occurred an event which, slight as it was, damped all longing to emulate him. Coming down what is now Divinity Avenue with an older boy, George Ware, who rejoiced in a bow and arrow, we stopped under the mulberry-tree which still stands at the entrance of the street, and he aimed at a beautiful crested cedar-bird which was feeding on the mulberries. By some extraordinary chance he hit it, and down came the pretty creature, fluttering and struggling in the air, with the cruel arrow through its breast. I do not know whether the actual sportsman suffered pangs of remorse, but I know that I did, and feel them yet. Afterwards I read with full sympathy Bettine Brentano's thoughts about the dead bird: "God gives him wings, and I shoot him down; that chimes not in tune." I later learned from Thoreau to study birds through an opera-glass.

It may appear strange that with this feeling about birds I seemed to have no such vivid feeling about fishes or insects. Perhaps it was because they are so much farther from the

human, and touch the imagination less. I could then fish all day by the seashore and could collect insects without hesitation, — always being self-limited in the latter case to two specimens of each species. Since the Civil War, however, I find that I can do neither of these things without compunction, and was pleased to hear from that eminent officer and thoroughly manly man, General Francis A. Walker, that the war had a similar effect on him. "Dulce bellum inexpertis." It has been a source of happiness for life to have acquired such early personal acquaintance with the numberless little people of the woods and mountains. Every spring they come out to meet me, each a familiar friend, unchanged in a world where all else changes; and several times in a year I dream by night of some realm gorgeous with gayly tinted beetles and lustrous butterflies. Wild flowers, also, have been a lasting delight, though these are a little less fascinating than insects, as belonging to a duller life. Yet I associate with each ravaged tract in my native town the place where vanished flowers once grew, — the cardinal flowers and gentians in the meadows, the gay rhexia by the woodside, and the tall hibiscus by the river.

Being large and tolerably strong, I loved all kinds of athletic exercises, and learned to swim

in the river near where Professor Horsford's active imagination has established the "Lief's booths" of the Norse legends. There have been few moments in life which ever gave a sense of conquest and achievement so delicious as when I first clearly made my way through water beyond my depth, from one sedgy bank to another. Skating was learned on Craigie's Pond, now drained, and afterwards practiced on the beautiful black ice of Fresh Pond. We played baseball and football, and a modified cricket, and on Saturdays made our way to the tenpin alleys at Fresh Pond or Porter's Tavern. My father had an old white pony which patiently ambled under me, and I was occasionally allowed to borrow Dr. Webster's donkey, the only donkey I had ever seen. Sometimes we were taken to Nahant for a day by the seaside, and watched there the swallows actually building their nests in Swallows' Cave, whence they have long since vanished. Perhaps we drove down over the interminable beach, but we oftener went in the steamboat; and my very earliest definite recollection is that of being afraid to go down into the cabin for dinner because a black waiter — the first I ever saw — had just gone down, and I was afraid. Considering how deeply I was to cast in my lot with the black race in later years, it seems curious that the

acquaintance should have begun with this unsubstantial and misplaced alarm. Probably the fact was fixed firmly in memory by the resulting hunger.

It was a great advantage for outdoor training that my school was a mile off, and I paced the distance to and fro, twice a day, through what was then a rural region interspersed with a few large houses of historical associations. The great colonial residences on Tory Row, of which Craigie House was only one, always impressed the imagination. Sometimes I had companions, — my elder brother for a time, and his classmates, Lowell and Story. I remember treading along close behind them once, as they discussed Spenser's "Faerie Queene," which they had been reading, and which led us younger boys to christen a favorite play-place "the Bower of Blisse." Story was then a conspicuously handsome boy, with a rather high-bred look, and overflowing with fun and frolic, as indeed he was during his whole life. Lowell was at that time of much more ordinary appearance, short and freckled, and a secondary figure beside Story; yet in later life, with his fine eyes and Apollo-like brow, he became much the more noticeable of the two, as he was certainly far superior in genius.

Oftener I went alone. Sometimes I made

up stories as I went, usually magnifying little incidents or observations of my own into some prolonged tale with a fine name, having an imaginary hero. For a long time his name was D'Arlon, from the person of that name in Taylor's "Philip van Artevelde," which my mother was reading to us. In these imaginings all the small wrongs and failures of my life were retrieved. D'Arlon went through the same incidents with myself, but uniformly succeeded where I had failed, and came out of the crisis with the unerring certainty of one of Stanley Weyman's heroes. One of my chief playmates, Thornton Ware, a handsome boy with curly black hair, the admiration of all little girls, might easily distance me in their regard, but had no chance whatever against the imaginary D'Arlon. At other times I had no material for a story, but watched the robins, the bluebirds, and above all the insects, acquiring an eagle eye for a far-off moth or beetle on fence or wall. I remember that at the corner where Craigie Street now turns off from Brattle Street, there was a clump of milkweed, where every day there was some new variety of spotted ladybird (*coccinella* or *chrysomela*); and I remember pondering, as I compared them, with pre-Darwinian wonder, whether they were all created from the beginning as separate species,

or were somehow developed from one another. On other days I played a game of football a mile long, trying to kick before me some particular stone or horse-chestnut for the whole distance from the school door to my own gate; sometimes betting heavily with myself, and perhaps losing manfully, like Dick Swiveller at his solitary cribbage. Then in winter there was always the hope of "punging," getting a ride on the runners of a sleigh, or hitching my sled behind some vehicle; and in spring that of riding with the driver of an empty ice-cart or walking beside a full one, and watching the fine horses that then, in endless procession, drew heavy wagons bearing the winter harvest of Fresh Pond to be shipped to distant lands.

My most immediate playmate was the next-door neighbor, already mentioned, who in later life was a medical professor in Brown University. He was a prim, grave little boy, and was called "old-fashioned;" he was very precocious, and though only three months older than myself was a year before me in college, graduating at just seventeen, — each of us being the youngest in our respective classes. There was between our houses only the field now occupied by the Hemenway Gymnasium and the Scientific School; and while we were not school-

mates, we were almost constantly together out of school hours. Many an hour we spent poring over the pictures in the large old Rees' Cyclopædia ; afterwards, when weary, piling up the big volumes for fortifications, to be mutually assailed by cannonading apples from a perpetual barrel in the closet. Meanwhile, the kindly old grandfather, working away at his sermons or his "American Annals," never seemed disturbed by our romping; and I remember vividly one winter evening, when he went to the window, and, scratching with his knife-blade through the thick frost, shaped the outlines of rough brambles below, and made a constellation of stars above, with the added motto, "Per aspera ad astra," — then explaining to us its meaning, that through difficulties we must seek the stars.

It is a mistake to suppose that we did not have, sixty years ago in New England, associations already historic. At home we had various family portraits of ancestors in tie-wigs or powdered hair. We knew the very treasures which Dr. Holmes describes as gathered in his attic, and never were tired of exploring old cupboards and hunting up traditions. We delighted to pore over the old flat tombstones in the Old Cambridge cemetery, stones with long Latin inscriptions, on which even the language

is dead, celebrating virtues ending in *issimus* and *errimus*. The most impressive of all was the Vassall monument, raised on pillars above the rest, and bearing no words, only the carved goblet and sun (Vas-sol), — the monument beneath which lie, according to tradition, the bodies of two slaves : —

> "At her feet and at her head
> Lies a slave to attend the dead,
> But their dust is white as hers."

This poem was not yet written, but Holmes's verses on this churchyard were familiar on our lips, and we sighed with him over his sister's grave, and over the stone where the French exile from Honfleur was buried and his epitaph was carved in French. Moreover, the "ever-roaming girls" whom Holmes exhorted to bend over the wall and "sweep the simple lines" with the floating curls then fashionable, — these were our own neighbors and sweethearts, and it all seemed in the last degree poetic and charming. More suggestive than all these were the eloquent fissures in the flat stones where the leaden coats of arms had been pried out to be melted into bullets for the Continental army. And it all so linked us with the past that when, years after, I stood outside the Temple Church in London, and, looking casually down, saw beneath my feet the name of Oliver Goldsmith,

it really gave no more sense of a dignified historic past than those stones at my birthplace. Nor did it actually carry me back so far in time.

In the same way, our walks, when not directed toward certain localities for rare flowers or birds or insects, — as to Mount Auburn sands, now included in the cemetery of that name, or the extensive jungle north of Fresh Pond, where the herons of Longfellow's poem had their nests, — were more or less guided by historic objects. There was the picturesque old Revolutionary Powder Mill in what is now Somerville, or the remains of redoubts on Winter Hill, where we used to lie along the grassy slopes and repel many British onslaughts. Often we went to the fascinating wharves of Boston, then twice as long as now, and full of sea-smells and crossed yards and earringed sailors. A neighbor's boy had the distinction of being bad enough to be actually sent to sea for a dubious reformation; and though, when he came back, I was forbidden to play with him, on the ground that he not only swore, but carried an alleged pistol, yet it was something to live on the same street with one so marked out from the list of common boys, and to watch him from afar exhibiting to youths of laxer training what seemed to be the

weapon. I may here add that the only other child with whom I was forbidden to play became in later life an eminent clergyman.

Once we undertook to go as far as Bunker Hill, and were ignominiously turned back by a party of Charlestown boys, — "Charlestown pigs," as they were then usually and affectionately called, — who charged us with being "Port chucks" (that is, from Cambridgeport) or "Pointers" (that is, from Lechmere Point, or East Cambridge), and ended with the mild torture of taking away our canes. Or we would visit the ruins of the Ursuline Convent, whose flames I had seen from our front door in Cambridge, standing by my mother's side; all that I had read of persecutions not implanting so lasting a love of liberty as that one spectacle. I stood by her also the day after, when she went out to take the gauge of public opinion in consultation with the family butcher, Mr. Houghton; and I saw her checkmated by his leisurely retort, "Wal, I dunno, Mis' Higginson; I guess them bishops are pretty dissipated characters." The interest was enhanced by the fact that a youthful Cambridge neighbor, Maria Fay, was a pupil in the school at the time, and was held up by the terrified preceptress to say to the rioters, "My father is a judge, and if you don't go away he will put you

all in jail." The effect of the threat may have been somewhat impaired by the fact that her parent was but a peaceful judge of probate, and could only have wreaked his vengeance on their last wills and testaments. At any rate, there stood the blackened walls for many years, until the bricks were used in building the inside walls of the cathedral towers in Boston; and there was no other trace of the affray, except the inscription "Hell to the Pope," scrawled in charcoal on a bit of lingering plaster. We gazed at it with awe, as if it were a memorial of Bloody Mary — with a difference.

Greatly to my bliss, I escaped almost absolutely all those rigors of the old New England theology which have darkened the lives of so many. I never heard of the Five Points of Calvinism until maturity; never was converted, never experienced religion. We were expected to read the New Testament, but there was nothing enforced about the Old, and we were as fortunate as a little girl I have since known, who was sure that there could be no such place as hell, because their minister had never mentioned it. Even Sunday brought no actual terrors. I have the sweetest image of my mother sitting ready dressed for church, before my sisters had descended, and usually bearing a flower in her hand. In winter we commonly

drove to the parish church in an open sleigh, and once had an epoch-making capsize into a snowdrift. As I was seized by the legs and drawn forth, I felt like the hero of one of the Waverley novels, and as if I had been in Rob Roy's cave. No doubt we observed the Sabbath after a mild fashion, for I once played a surreptitious game of ball with my brother behind the barn on that day, and it could not have made me so very happy had it not been, as Emerson says, "drugged with the relish of fear and pain." Yet I now recall with pleasure that while my mother disapproved of all but sacred music on Sunday, she ruled that all good music was sacred; and that she let us play on Sunday evening a refreshing game of cards, — geographical cards, — from which we learned that the capital of Dahomey was Abomey. Compared with the fate of many contemporaries, what soothing and harmless chains were these!

In all these early recollections there has been small mention of the other sex, and yet that sweet entity was to me, and in fact to all of us boys, a matter of most momentous importance. We were all, it now seems to me, a set of desperate little lovers, with formidable rivalries, suspicions, and jealousies; and we had names of our own devising for each juvenile maiden,

by which she could be mentioned without peril of discovery. One of the older boys, being of a peculiarly inventive turn, got up a long and imaginary wooing of a black-eyed damsel who went to school in Cambridge. He showed us letters and poems, and communicated all the ups and downs of varying emotion. They were finally separated, amid mutual despair, and I do not suppose that she had ever known him by sight. We had our share of dancing-schools, always in private houses, taught sometimes by the elder Papanti, and sometimes by a most graceful woman, Miss Margaret Davis, sister of the songstress I have described. We had May-day parties, usually at Mount Auburn, and showed in the chilly May mornings that heroic courage which Lowell plaintively attributes to children on these occasions. But all this sporting with Amaryllis soon became secondary for us, being Cambridge boys, to the great realm of academical life, to which no girls might then aspire. That vast mysterious region lies always before the boy who is bred in a college town, alluring, exciting, threatening, as the sea lies before the sailor's son. One by one he sees his elder playmates glide away upon it, until at last his turn comes; and before I was fourteen I myself was launched.

## II

### A CHILD OF THE COLLEGE

I COME back to Cambridge every autumn, when the leaves are falling from the trees, and the old university, like the weird witch-hazel in the groves, puts out fresh blossoms at the season when all else grows sere. It is a never failing delight to behold the hundreds of new-comers who then throng our streets: boys with smooth and unworn faces, full of the zest of their own being, taking the whole world as having been made for them, which indeed it was; — willing to do any needful kindness to an elder human being, as in rescuing him from carriage-wheels or picking him out of the mud, but otherwise as wholesomely indifferent to his very existence as if he were a lamp-post or a horseless vehicle. If he be wise, he joyfully accepts the situation, and takes in it something of the pride which a father feels when his youngest son overtops him by a head. Instead of grudging to the new-comers this empire of the immediate future, I feel always impelled to welcome them to it; in behalf of the human race,

I rejoice to see its vigor so lustily maintained; the visible self-confidence is well founded, and has the facts on its side. The future is theirs to command, not ours; it belongs to them even more than they think it does, and this is undoubtedly saying a good deal.

This ready self-subordination to these kings of to-morrow may come, in my own case, from the fact that I am, more than any one else now living in Cambridge, except perhaps John Holmes and Professor Norton, a child of the college; and the latter is my junior, and was once in my eyes one of these very boys. All three of us were, so to speak, born in the college, bred to it, and interested from earliest recollection in its men. Never having been or having wished to be one of its officials, I look upon its annual harvest of youthful life with all the more dispassionate interest. Living in a college town is, after all, very much like dwelling just outside of a remarkably large glass beehive, where one can watch all day long the busy little people inside; can see them going incessantly to and fro at their honey-making, pausing occasionally to salute or sting one another — and all without the slightest peril to the beholder. Life becomes rich in this safe and curious contemplation, and this is a pursuit which every boy in a college

town begins very early. It was thus that Charles Parsons and I, from the time we were allowed to go alone in the street, studied the little academical world on whose edge we dwelt.

At ten years of age, it is certain, we could repeat the list of every undergraduate class alphabetically, and prided ourselves on knowing every student by sight. This was not so incredible as it would now seem, for the classes rarely had more than fifty each, the whole college counting little more than half as many as a single class now numbers. All these young fellows we not merely knew by sight, but studied individually, — their nicknames, their games, their individual haunts; — we watched them at football or cricket; had our favorites and our aversions; waited anxiously for the time when, once or twice a year, the professor of chemistry gave many of them "exhilarating gas," as it was called, on the triangle then known as the Delta, and they gesticulated, made speeches, or recited poetry, as unconscious of their self-revelation as an autobiographer.

Sometimes in summer evenings — for the college term then lasted until the middle of July — we would amuse ourselves by selecting in the street some single student, and trailing him from place to place, like the Indians of

whom we had read in Cooper's novels; following wherever he went, watching, waiting, often losing and then finding him again, and perhaps delaying our own early bedtime that we might see him through some prolonged evening call, though he was all unconscious of our watchful care. I can still breathe the aroma of the lilac-bushes among which we ensconced ourselves, and can catch a glimpse of the maiden who possibly appeared at the door to bid him a demure good-night. On other days there was the Harvard Washington Corps, or college military company, to be watched at its drill on the common, or on its proud march to the suburban tavern where it dined, — Porter's, at what is now North Cambridge, — and on its sometimes devious return. O ecstasy of childish love for costume and rhythm and glory! In later life I have ridden at the head of a thousand marching men, and felt no such sense of exaltation above the low earth as when I first saw my favorite elder brother, in the prescribed white trousers and black coat, with epaulets and befrogged sleeves, parading as second lieutenant before one of the swaying platoons of the "College Company."

With all this precocious interest in the students, it is needless to say that I awaited with absorbing eagerness the time when I

should enter that great little world into which my immediate playmate had preceded me ; and that it was a blissful moment when I at last found myself, one autumn morning, admitted on examination, without conditions, and standing on the steps of University Hall, looking about with a new sense of ownership on the trees my father had planted. I was not yet fourteen, and was the youngest in my class ; but never since in life have I had such a vivid sense of a career, an opportunity, a battle to be won. This is what gilds the memory of college life : that we dwelt there like Goethe's fairy Melusina or the heroine of O'Brien's "Diamond Lens," in a real but miniature world, a microcosm of the visible universe. It seems to me that I never have encountered a type of character in the greater world which was not represented more or less among my classmates, or dealt with any thought or principle which was not discussed in elementary form in our evening walks up Brattle Street.

Harvard College was then a comparatively small affair, as was the village in which it existed ; but both had their day of glory, which was Commencement Day, now a merely academic ceremonial, but then a public festival for eastern Massachusetts. It has been so well described by both Lowell and John Holmes

that I will not dwell upon it in detail. The streets were filled with people, arriving from far and near; there were booths, fairs, horse-races, encampments of alleged gamblers in outlying groves. Perhaps the most striking single illustrations of the day's importance lay in the fact that the banks in Boston were closed on that day, and that Boston gentlemen, even if not graduates of the college, often came to Cambridge for a day or two, at that time, taking rooms and receiving their friends. My grandfather, Stephen Higginson, used to come over from Brookline, take quarters in this way at Porter's tavern (the Boylston Street Porter), and keep open house, with probable punch-bowl. The practice had ceased before the period of my recollection, but my cousin, the Rev. William Henry Channing, has vividly described the way in which my grandfather must have set out on these expeditions.[1]

[1] "Owing doubtless to the fact that, following the universal fashion of gentlemen of his position in that period, he wore his gray hair powdered, he was to me the type of all that was most ancient and venerable. His imposing figure, air, and manner filled me with ever new admiration, as, clothed in entire black, with his snowy locks and queue, and his ruffled wristbands and shirt bosom, white cravat above, and tightly buttoned gaiters or buckled shoes below, with broad brimmed hat and gold-headed cane, he descended the doorsteps to enter his carriage. This carriage, one of the large, brightly ornamented, highly polished style then in

For the rest of the year Cambridge relapsed into a kind of privacy, except that three days of "Exhibition" — a sort of minor Commencement, with public exercises — were distributed through the terms, and brought together many strangers. At ordinary times the external status of the college was more like that of some country academy than that of an embryo university. There were but seven buildings inside the college yard, and but one outside. There are now about 3000 students, of various grades and departments, registered in Cambridge; in 1837, when I entered college, there were but 305 such students; and in 1841, when I graduated, but 366. In like manner, Cambridge is now a city of some 85,000 inhabitants, whereas in 1840 it had but 8409, distributed among three villages, of which Old Cambridge, grouped round the college buildings, had less than half.

vogue, with a lofty cushioned box-seat for the coachman and platform behind for the footman, had been built in England, whence my grandfather had lately returned, and was, I presume, of very much the same pattern as thousands which are seen every day in all European and American cities. But it affected my imagination then as a princely equipage. So, as all boys are wont to fancy, my grandfather appeared to me the peer of the noblest. And still more stately and elegant was he to my imagination when attired in full costume to receive his guests at dinner or evening parties in his own house." — *Memoir of William Henry Channing*, by O. B. Frothingham, p. 9.

Yet, after all, these figures make little difference to the boy; a crowd is a crowd, whether it be counted by hundreds or thousands, since you see at the most only those immediately pressing round you. For us, I repeat, the college was a world; whether larger or smaller on the outskirts was of secondary importance.

It is mistakenly assumed by clergymen and editors that this little community, in its village days, was necessarily more virtuous, or at least more decorous, than now. The fact is all the other way; for the early drinking habits of society still flourished, and the modern temperance agitation was but beginning. When Allston, the painter, kept the records of the Hasty Pudding Club, in rhyme, he thus described the close of the annual dinner of that frugal body: —

> "And each one to evince his spunk
> Vied with his neighbor to get drunk;
> Nor tedious was the mighty strife
> With these true-blooded blades of life,
> For less than hours two had gone
> When roaring mad was every one."

Allston left college in 1800, forty years before my day; yet it was in my own time that the Rev. Dr. John Pierce recorded in his Diary that he had seen men intoxicated at Φ B K dinners — this society being composed only of the best scholars in each class — who were

never seen in this condition at any other time. We boys used to watch the Harvard Washington Corps on its return from the dinner at Porter's, quite secure that some of our acquaintances would stagger out of the ranks and find lodgment in the gutter. The regular Class Day celebration was for the seniors to gather under Liberty Tree and serve out buckets of punch to all comers. Robbing hen-roosts was common enough, and youths of good standing in my own class would organize marauding expeditions, with large baskets, to bring back pears and melons from the market gardens in what is now Belmont. These thefts hurt no one's reputation at that day, whereas now to be suspected of them would dethrone the most popular man : he would be voted a "cad" or a "mucker;" he would be dropped from his clubs. As for the drinking habit, I have no statistics to offer, but an intoxicated student is the rarest possible sight in the streets of Cambridge. This may not involve a clear gain in morality, but the improvement in gentlemanliness is enormous.

The college of that period has been sometimes described as drawing its members from a smaller geographical range than at present. This was of course true in a general way, yet in one respect the precise contrary was the

case. In that ante-bellum period, the Southern students were a noticeable element in the college, and a very conspicuous one in the Law School, being drawn thereto by the great reputation of Judge Story; and as these youths were all reared under the influence of slavery, they contributed a far more distinctive element in Cambridge society than anything now to be seen there. The difference between the richest student from New York or California and the very poorest and most abstemious boy from some New England farm is not nearly so marked as that which then distinguished the demeanor of the average Southern from the average New England student. As a rule, the Southerners were clearly the favorites in Cambridge society: they usually had charming manners, social aptitudes, imperious ways, abundant leisure, and plenty of money; they were graceful dancers, often musical, and sometimes well taught. On the other hand, they were often indolent, profligate, and quarrelsome; and they were almost wholly responsible for the "town and gown" quarrels, now extinct, but then not infrequent. Contributing sometimes the most brilliant young men to the Law School, they furnished also a number who, having been brought up on remote plantations and much indulged, had remained grossly ignorant. I

remember one in particular who was supposed to have entered the Law School, but who proved to be taking private lessons in something from Charles Devens, afterwards judge and major-general. A mystery hung about the matter till it was found that the youth, who was as showy as any of his companions in dress and bearing, was simply learning to read and write.

Let us now turn back to the condition of intellectual affairs. The entrance examination of those days was by no means the boys' play that is sometimes asserted. It represented, no doubt, a year less of work than the present examination; yet it included some points not now made obligatory, as for instance the rendering of English into Greek and Latin. We were also called upon to translate at sight from authors not previously read, although this provision did not appear in the catalogues, and is usually cited as of more recent origin. Once fairly inside, my class was lucky enough to encounter a very exceptional period, — the time, namely, when a temporary foray into the elective system took place, anticipating in a small way the very desirable results which have followed from its later application; although that first experiment was, unluckily, discontinued in a few years under a more conserva-

tive president. Meanwhile, the class of 1841 was one of the very few which enjoyed its benefits. Under the guidance of George Ticknor, the method had long been applied to the modern languages; but we were informed one day, to our delight, that it was to be extended also to mathematics, with a prospect of further expansion. As a matter of fact, the word "elective" did not appear on the college catalogues until 1841–42, but for two years previous this special announcement about mathematics had been given in a footnote. The spirit of a new freedom began at once to make itself felt in other departments; the Latin and Greek professors, for instance, beginning to give lectures, though in an irregular way, in addition to their usual duty of extracting from us what small knowledge we possessed. The reason why the experiment was made with mathematics was understood to be that Professor Peirce had grown weary of driving boys through the differential calculus by force, and Professor Channing had declared that all taste for mathematics was a matter of special inspiration. For myself, I eagerly took this study as an elective, with about ten classmates; nor had I any reason to repent the choice.

Professor Benjamin Peirce, our mathematical teacher, was then put, by general opinion, at the

head of American mathematicians, — a place which, I believe, he still retains by tradition. In his later years, and after the abandonment of the temporary elective method, he may have become discouraged or apathetic, but when I knew him he was in his prime, and he was to me of all teachers the most inspiring and delightful. He was then a very handsome man, with the most eager and ardent manner, alternating with deep absorption, and he gave beyond all others the effect of original and creative genius. We studied, by an added stroke of good luck, his "Curves and Functions," which was just passing through the press, and the successive parts of which were bound up for our use. This increased the charm ; it seemed like mathematics in the process of construction. I was already old enough to appreciate the wonderful compactness and close reasoning of these volumes, and to enter with eager zest into filling the intermediate gaps afforded by the long steps often taken from one equation to another. Dr. Bowditch, the translator of Laplace's "Mécanique Céleste," used to say that whenever he came to one of Laplace's "Whence it plainly appears," he was in for an hour or two of toil in order to make this exceeding plainness visible. It was often so with Peirce's books, but this enhanced the pleasure of the chase. He himself took

part in it: a thought would sometimes flash into his mind, and he would begin to work it out on the blackboard before our eyes; forgetting our very existence, he would labor away with the chalk, writing out with lightning rapidity a series of equations, smaller and smaller, chasing his scientific prey down into the utmost right-hand corner of the blackboard, and finally turning to us with a sigh when the pursuit was ended. Again was the science of mathematics being created before our very eyes; it was like being present at the first discoveries of some old Greek or Arabian geometrician. Peirce had also the delightful quality of being especially interested in all of this his first voluntary class, and indeed of greatly overrating their merits. When I left college, he gave me an indorsement which took my breath away, and had me placed, at eighteen, on the examining committee in his department. Years after, when in a fair way to pass some time in jail after an anti-slavery riot, I met him, and said that I had reserved that period of imprisonment for reviewing mathematics and reading Laplace. His fine eyes kindled, and he replied, "In that case, I sincerely hope that you may go there." He was then vehemently opposed to the abolitionists, and it seemed a double blessing to gag one of

them and at the same time create a mathematician. The indictment was, unluckily, quashed, so that both his hopes were disappointed.

Next to Peirce's teaching came, without question, both in stimulus and in attractions, the English course of Professor Edward Tyrrel Channing. Professor Wendell has lately spoken of the present standard of training in English composition at Harvard as if it were quite a new thing; but with some opportunity of observing it, I have never had reason to think it any new departure as compared with that given by Professor Channing down to 1841 at least. The evidence would seem to be that between that period and 1846, when Professor Child graduated, Professor Channing had in some way lost his hold upon his pupils as his years advanced; so that when Professor Child succeeded to the chair, in 1851, it was with a profound distrust in the whole affair, insomuch that the very department of rhetoric and oratory came near being wiped out of existence, and was saved by the indignant protest of the late Charles Francis Adams.

Certain it is that this department was, in my time, by far the most potent influence in determining college rank, and therefore in stimulating ambition. We wrote themes every fortnight and forensics once a month; and as

these were marked on a scale of 48, and ordinary recitations on a scale of 8, the importance of this influence may be seen. Never in my life have I had to meet such exacting criticism on anything written as came from Professor Channing, and never have I had any praise so encouraging as his. My marks were often second in the class, sometimes equaling — O day of glory! — those of my classmate, Francis Edward Parker, who was easily first; and to have a passage read to the class for praise, even anonymously, was beyond all other laurels, though the satisfaction might be marred occasionally by the knowledge that my elder sister had greatly helped in that particular sentence. When it is considered that Channing's method reared most of the well-known writers whom New England was then producing, — that it was he who trained Emerson, C. F. Adams, Hedge, A. P. Peabody, Felton, Hillard, Winthrop, Holmes, Sumner, Motley, Phillips, Bowen, Lovering, Torrey, Dana, Lowell, Thoreau, Hale, Thomas Hill, Child, Fitzedward Hall, Lane, and Norton, — it will be seen that the classic portion of our literature came largely into existence under him. He fulfilled the aspiration attributed to Increase Mather when he wished to become president of Harvard College: to mould not merely the teaching, but

the teachers, — *non lapides dolare, sed architectos.*

The controlling influence of a college is determined, of course, by its officers, and I have never felt that we had anything in respect of which we could complain. The experience lately described by an elder contemporary of discovering that he personally knew more than at least the tutors of his time was one which never troubled me. Two of the four tutors, Bowen and Lovering, were men eminent as scholars from youth to old age; the third, Jones Very, was a man of genius; and the fourth, Charles Mason, — now Judge Mason, of Fitchburg, — certainly knew incomparably more of Latin than I did. Of the older professors, Felton was a cultivated Greek scholar, and Beck brought to Latin the thoroughness of his German drill. I need not say what it was to read French with Longfellow; and it is pleasant to remember that once — during one of those preposterous little rebellions which then occurred every two or three years, and which have wholly disappeared under a freer discipline — when the students were gathered in the college yard, and had refused to listen to several professors, there was a hush when Longfellow appeared, and my classmate, John Revere, cried out, "We will hear Professor

Longfellow, for he always treats us like gentlemen." Longfellow was the first, I think, to introduce the prefix "Mr." in addressing students, a thing now almost universal.

For our other modern-language teachers, we had Pietro Bachi, a picturesque Italian refugee; in German, Bernard Roelker, since well known as a lawyer in New York; and we had that delightful old Francis Sales, whom Lowell has commemorated, as our teacher of Spanish. In him we had a man who might have stepped bodily out of the Gil Blas and Don Quixote he taught. We never knew whether he was French or Spanish. He was then about sixty-five, and his robust head and shoulders, his pigtail and powdered hair, with his quaint accent, made him seem the survival of some picturesque and remote age. He was, moreover, extremely indulgent, gave the highest marks for recitations, and was in all respects a favorite. A classmate who sat next me, George Hay, took delight in inflicting upon the innocent old man the most incredible or old-fashioned English oaths as equivalent to the quaint Spanish expletives; and when he gravely introduced "Odds' fish" or "Gogzounds," Mr. Sales would look bewildered for a moment, and then roll out his stentorian "Ha! ha! ha! By Jorge!" in a way to add still further to the list of unex-

pected phrases, and to make the dusty room in Massachusetts Hall jubilant for that day.

President Quincy was popular among us, but lost direct weight in our minds through his failure of memory and the necessity of constantly telling him who we were. Dr. Walker we admired because of his wise and sententious preaching, and his reputation, not unjustified, of peculiar penetration into character. Jared Sparks lectured on history, under great disadvantages; and I have always been gratified that it was from him — a man accounted unimaginative — that for the first time the thought was suggested to us of the need of imagination to an historian, not for the purpose of invention, but for re-creating a given period and shaping it in the representation. Dr. Harris, the librarian and naturalist, was always a delightful teacher and friend, and I especially enjoyed attendance on his private class in entomology, in the evening, for which we got no college credits. Sometimes we took walks with him, or brought him new plants or butterflies. I was secretary of the college Natural History Society for a time, and in looking back on the various reports written by me for its meetings, it is interesting to see that this wholly voluntary work had a freshness and vigor beyond what I can now trace in any of

the "themes" of which Professor Channing thought so well. There is no greater mark of progress in the university than the expansion of its electives to include the natural sciences. My own omnivorousness in study was so great that I did not suffer very much from our restricted curriculum; but there were young men in my time who would have graduated in these later days with highest honors in some department of physics or biology, but who were then at the very foot of the class, and lost for life the advantage of early training in the studies they loved. Akin to this modern gain and equally unquestionable is the advantage now enjoyed in the way of original research. Every year young men of my acquaintance come to me for consultation about some thesis they are preparing in history or literature, and they little know the envy with which they inspire their adviser; that they should be spared from the old routine to investigate anything for themselves seems such a happiness.

There is not the slightest doubt in my mind, as an extra-collegiate observer, of the vast improvement made by the elective system; and I should like to see it extended yet more widely, so as to annul absolutely all distinction in grade between "academic" and "scientific" courses. The day of universal scholarship, when Plutarch

or Bacon could go the round of knowledge and label every item, is as extinct as the saurian epoch. The world is simply too large. The most enthusiastic scholar must forego ten times as many paths as he can pursue, and must resign himself to be a specialist. It is inevitable, but it has obvious disadvantages. The last of the old-fashioned Cambridge scholars of whom one could ask a miscellaneous question, with prospect of answer, died with the late Professor Torrey. I now know that I can make no inquiry so difficult but there is probably some man in Cambridge who can answer it; yet it may take a week of investigation to ascertain just who that man is. On the other hand, the things which these wise men do not know are constantly surprising, at least to a survivor of the less specializing period. I have had a professor of political economy stop me in the street to ask who Charles Brockden Brown was; and when I suggested to a senior student who was seeking a lecturer for some society that he might ask John Fiske, he replied that he had never heard his name. Now, I knew all about Charles Brockden Brown before I was twelve years old, from Sparks's "American Biography," and it was not easy to see how any one could read the newspapers, even three or four years ago, and not be familiar with the name of

John Fiske. Yet this specialization extends, in truth, to all classes of the community. A Boston lawyer, the other day, told a friend of mine that, in his opinion, the Harvard professors were less eminent than formerly. My friend replied with truth that the only difference was that they were less likely to be all-round men, known to everybody; but that the teachers of to-day were more likely to be eminent in some particular department, in which they usually knew far more than their predecessors. "There is, for instance," he said, "Professor Farlow, who has an international reputation as an authority in cryptogamic botany." "I never even heard of him," said the lawyer, "nor of cryptogamic botany, either."

The same change is apparent in the varying standards of athletic exercise. To those who loved, as I did, the old-time football, — the very thud of the ball, the scent of bruised grass, the mighty rush of a hundred men, the swift and cool defense, — there is something insufficient in the presence of a whole university sitting and shivering in the chill wind around an arena where a few picked gladiators push and wrestle; while those who know every point of the new contest feel a natural contempt for the crudities of the old. So those who now regard with surprise, or even lift with

irreverence, the heavy three-cornered bats and large balls of the game we called cricket — the very implements used by my own class are deposited at the Hemenway Gymnasium — do not know that their comments are like those of Saladin on the heavy sword of King Richard, which ponderous weapon, after all, did good service in its day. The joy of athletic exercises is a part of the youth to which they belong, and does not depend upon the advance of science; nor is the admiration of their heroes a matter of to-day only. I never saw the late Charles Franklin Shimmin, of Boston, up to his dying day, that I did not recall the thrill of admiration for his unequaled "rushes" on the football field; and when we casually met, we always talked about them. Of the two best bowlers in my class, the one, Charles Sedgwick, was at the head of the class in scholarship, and the other, Eben William Rollins, was far down in the rank list, but they were equally our heroes at the cricketing hour. The change chiefly perceptible to me to-day is that whereas we were proud of Sedgwick's scholarship as well as of his bowling, it is likely that, in the present intense absorption in what may be called vicarious athletics, any amount of intellectual eminence would count but as the dust on the fly-wheel. In this respect we go a little

further just now, I fancy, than our English kinsfolk. It is a rare thing in our American Cambridge to hear of any student as being admired for his scholarship; but when I was taken, twenty years ago, to see the intercollegiate races at the older Cambridge, my friends were as careful to point out the men who were "great swells" in chemistry or in Greek as to call my attention to "the celebrated stroke, Goldie."

The class to which I belonged — the class of 1841 — was compact and tolerably well united, though small. It had perhaps more than the usual share of class feeling, which probably dated from the time when we had the rare experience of defeating the sophomores at the opening game of football. There was an impression that the Faculty were rather afraid of us, a view which would probably have much astonished those worthy gentlemen had it ever reached their ears. The strongest impression which is conveyed by looking back on our number collectively, after a half century's lapse, is that of the utter impossibility of casting in advance the horoscope of a whole set of young men. The class numbered several who afterwards won distinction in different walks in life; and while the actual careers of some might have been predicted, there were other lives

which could not possibly have been anticipated by any of us. It required no great foresight to guess that Edward Clarke and Francis Minot would be physicians, and even eminent ones; that Rufus Woodward, of Worcester, would also be a physician, and a naturalist besides; that Thomas Church Haskell Smith, of Ohio, who was universally known among us as "Captain Smith," and was the natural leader of the class, in case of civil war would become Major-General Smith, and chief of staff in the Army of the Potomac. Wickham Hoffman, of New York, showed in college the same steadfast and manly qualities which made him also prominent during the war as a staff officer at New Orleans, and afterwards as secretary of the American legation during the siege of Paris. Other instances might be cited; but, on the other hand, our class produced three men, all well known in later life, whose precise paths were such as no one of the class could ever by any possibility have guessed. Frank Parker, our first scholar, might naturally, we should all have said, reach the Supreme Bench in rapid strides; our ambition for him was unbounded; but that he should, instead of this, become the greatest business lawyer in Boston, that he should have charge of vast estates, that he should die rich, that his pall-bearers should be bank presidents

and millionaires, this was something that no one could have credited in advance. He had to be very economical in college, as had most of us, — he could go without what he wanted, — but certainly I never surmised in him any peculiar gift for the especially judicious investment of a half dollar. It is a curious illustration of what it is now the fashion to call "heredity" that when this same remark was made to the late Dr. A. P. Peabody, who had been Parker's pastor, he replied that it was perfectly true so far as it went, but that any one who had known Parker's father would have comprehended the whole affair. The latter, he said, although a clergyman, was the business adviser of half the men in his parish.

In another instance, which was yet more remarkable, I know of no such explanation. Not a classmate of Henry Fowle Durant's would ever have dreamed of the two achievements which have probably secured for his name a longer remembrance than will be awarded to any other member of the class; no one would have deemed it possible that he would make a fortune by the practice of criminal law, and then devote it to founding a woman's college. He lived out of the college yard, was little known in the class, was to all appearances indolent or without concentration — one of the

men whose favorite literature lies in old English plays. His very name was not that by which he afterwards became noted ; it being originally Henry Welles Smith, and being changed subsequently to gratify a relative who was also his benefactor.

Stranger than even this transformation of name and career was the third bit of the unexpected. The only member of the class who ever landed in the state's prison was precisely and unequivocally the most dignified and respectable man we mustered, — a man absolutely stainless as we knew him, whose whole aspect and bearing carried irresistible weight, and who was chosen by acclamation as the treasurer of our class fund. In truth, it was his face and manner that were his ruin ; he was a lawyer and had charge of estates ; trustful widows and orphans thronged round him and believed in him up to the moment the prison doors opened to receive him ; he could no more resist such perilous confidence than could Shakespeare's Autolycus, and might say with him, " If I had a mind to be honest, I see Fortune would not suffer me."

My only really intimate friend in the class was Parker, already named, who, although two years older than myself, and of more staidness of temperament and maturity of character, had

great influence over me, and was wonderfully patient with my often serious errors. I frequently spent nights at his room, and we had few secrets from each other. All this was in a certain way creditable to us both, — though more so to him, in proportion as he was the superior, — inasmuch as it was a period when the ambition for college rank was intensely strong, and we were running neck and neck for the first place, through the time of our greatest intimacy. He was the better writer, reasoner, and classicist; while I was fond of mathematics, which he hated, and was more successful than he in modern languages. Later, I discovered that we had been extremely close together in rank, most of the time, I sometimes passing him; and that he came out first by only some thirty or forty marks among many thousands. It was the only fitting conclusion; and as we were greatly separated, in maturer life, by his conservative and my radical tendencies, I rejoice to record this tribute to his memory. He had, even while in college, a certain cynicism, which was later very much developed, and rather marred his popularity; but his influence on us all was of the greatest value, as it was afterwards in the whole community where he lived.

I formed in college two other friendships,

outside my own class, both with men who subsequently rendered real service to literature and art. One was the late Charles Callahan Perkins, who became the author of works on the Tuscan and Italian sculptors, and was practically the founder of the Normal Art School in Boston, and of the whole system of art instruction in the public schools of Massachusetts. He was my room-mate during the senior year, and a most attractive person; handsome, refined, manly, without brilliant gifts, but with the most cultivated tastes and — a convenience quite rare among us — a liberal income. He was one of the few instances I have known of a man's being really helped and enlarged in his career by the possession of wealth — or what then passed for wealth — in youth. The other companion, who did more for my literary tastes than all other friends, was the late Levi Lincoln Thaxter, who in after-life helped more than any one to make Browning and Fitzgerald known in this country, — they being more widely read here in each case, for a time, than in their own land. This was the more remarkable as Thaxter never saw either of them, although he corresponded with Browning, who also wrote the inscription for his grave. Thaxter was about my age, though he was, like Perkins, two years

younger in college ; he was not a high scholar, but he was an ardent student of literature, and came much under the influence of his cousin, Maria White, and of Lowell, her betrothed. Thaxter first led me to Emerson and to Hazlitt ; the latter being for both of us a temporary and the former a lifelong source of influence. We were both lovers of Longfellow, also, and used to sit at the open window every New Year's Eve and read aloud his "Midnight Mass to the Dying Year." Thaxter was an enthusiastic naturalist, which was another bond of union, and he bequeathed this taste to his youngest son, now an assistant professor of botany in Harvard University. To Thaxter I owe, finally, the great privilege of borrowing from Maria White the first thin volumes of Tennyson's poems, which seemed to us, as was once said of Keats, to "double the value of words ;" and we both became, a few years later, subscribers to the original yellow-covered issue of Browning's "Bells and Pomegranates." Thaxter's personal modesty and reticence, and the later fame of his poet-wife, Celia, have obscured him to the world ; but he was one of the most loyal and high-minded of men.

At my graduation I was four months short of eighteen, and my purpose was to teach for a few years, and then to study law. This early

maturity had, however, one obvious advantage: that it would plainly give me more time to turn round, to pursue general study, and, if need be, to revise my choice of a pursuit. I ultimately used the interval for just these purposes, and was so far a gainer. In all other respects my youthfulness was a great disadvantage, and I have often dissuaded others from following my example in entering college too young. If they disregard the remonstrance, as is usually the case, great patience and charity are due them. The reason for this is that precocity scarcely ever extends through all the faculties at once, and those who are older than their years in some respects are almost always younger in others, — this being nature's way of restoring the balance. Even if intellect and body are alike precocious, the judgment and the moral sense may remain weak and immature. Development in other respects, therefore, creates false expectations and brings unforeseen temptations of its own. This was, at any rate, the result in my case, although it took me several years to find it out. The experience of those years demands, however, a chapter by itself.

## III

### THE PERIOD OF THE NEWNESS

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven."
>
> WORDSWORTH, *The Prelude*, Book XI.

THE above was the high-sounding name which was claimed for their own time by the youths and maidens who, under the guidance of Emerson, Parker, and others, took a share in the seething epoch sometimes called vaguely Transcendentalism. But as these chapters are to be mainly autobiographic, it is well to state with just what outfit I left college in 1841. I had a rather shallow reading knowledge of six languages, English, French, Spanish, Italian, Latin, and Greek, and had been brought in contact with some of the best books in each of these tongues. I may here add that I picked up at a later period German, Portuguese, and Hebrew, with a little Swedish; and that I hope to live long enough to learn at least the alphabet in Russian. Then I had acquired enough of the higher mathematics to have a pupil or two in that branch; something of the

forms of logic and of Locke's philosophy with the criticisms of the French eclectics upon it; a smattering of history and political economy; some crude acquaintance with field natural history; some practice in writing and debating; a passion for poetry and imaginative literature; a voracious desire for all knowledge and all action; and an amount of self-confidence which has now, after more than half a century, sadly diminished. It will be seen that this was an outfit more varied than graduates of the present day are apt to possess, but that it was also more superficial; their knowledge of what they know being often far more advanced as well as more solidly grounded than was mine. No matter; I was a happy boy, ankle-deep in a yet unfathomed sea.

I had two things in addition not set down in the college curriculum, but of the utmost influence on my future career. One of these has always been to me somewhat inexplicable. Cambridge was then a place of distinctly graded society, — more so, probably, than it is now. Lowell has admirably described the superb way in which old Royal Morse, the village constable and auctioneer, varied the courtesy of his salutation according to the social position of his acquaintance. I can remember no conversation around me looking toward the essential

equality of the human race, except as it was found in the pleased curiosity with which my elder brothers noted the fact that the President's man-servant, who waited at table during his dinner parties, became on the muster field colonel of the militia regiment, and as such gave orders to Major Quincy, there his subordinate, but at other times his employer. In each professor's family there was apt to be a country boy "living out," "doing chores" and attending school; these boys often rose to influence and position in later life, and their children or descendants are now professors in the university and leaders in Cambridge society. The "town school" was distinctly a grade school; I had never entered it; did not play much with the "town boys," and was rather afraid of them. Yet it must have been that there was left over from the American Revolution something of the popular feeling then inspired, for without aid or guidance I was democratic in feeling; longed to know something of all sorts and conditions of men, and had a distinct feeling that I should like to be, for a year or two, a mechanic of some kind — a carpenter or blacksmith — in order to place myself in sympathy with all. The nearest I ever came to this was in making some excursions with an elder brother who, as engineer, was laying out the track of the Old

Colony Railroad, and who took me as "hind chain man" at a dollar a day. I still recall with delight the sense of honest industry, the tramping through the woods, and the occasional dinners at farmhouses. It was at one of these festivities that, when my brother had eaten one piece of mince pie but declined a second helping, our host remarked with hospitable dignity, "Consult your feelings, sir, about the meat pie."

Another most important change was passing in me at about this time; the sudden development of social aptitudes hitherto dormant. As an overgrown boy — for I was six feet tall at fourteen — I had experienced all the agonies of bashfulness in the society of the other sex, though greatly attracted to it. I find it difficult to convince my associates of later years that I then habitually sat mute while others chattered. A word or two of remonstrance from my mother had in a single day corrected this, during my senior year, so far as the family table was concerned; and this emboldened me to try the experiment on a wider field. I said to myself, thinking of other young men who made themselves quite agreeable, "These youths are not your superiors, — perhaps, in the recitation-room or on the playground, hardly your equals; why not cope with them else-

where?" Thus influenced, I conquered myself in a single evening and lost my shyness forever. The process was unique, so far as I know, and I have often recommended it to shy young men. Being invited to a small party, I considered beforehand what young ladies would probably be there. With each one I had, of course, something in common, — kinship, or neighborhood, or favorite pursuit. This would do, I reasoned, for a starting-point; so I put down on a small sheet of paper what I would say to each, if I happened to be near her. It worked like a charm; I found myself chatting away, the whole evening, and heard the next day that everybody was surprised at the transformation. I have to this day the little bit of magic paper, on which I afterwards underscored, before sleeping, the points actually used.

It set me free; after this I went often to tolerably large parties in Cambridge and Boston, in the latter case under guidance of my brother Waldo, who had now graduated from the Harvard Washington Corps into the Boston Cadets, and was an excellent social pilot. I saw the really agreeable manners which then prevailed in the little city, and cannot easily be convinced that there are now in the field any youths at once so manly and so elegant as were the two

especial leaders among the beaux of that day, John Lothrop Motley and his brother-in-law, John Lewis Stackpole. It did not surprise me to read in later days that the former was habitually addressed as "Milord," to a degree that vexed him, by waiters in Continental hotels. Such leaders were doubtless good social models, as was also the case with my brother; but I had more continuous influences in the friendship of two fair girls, both of whom were frank, truthful, and attractive. One of them — Maria Fay of convent fame, already mentioned — was a little older than myself, while the other, just my own age, Mary Devens, was the younger sister of Charles Devens, afterwards eminent in war and peace. She died young, but I shall always be grateful for the good she unconsciously did me; and I had with both the kind of cordial friendship, without a trace of love-making, yet tinged with refined sentiment, which is for every young man a most fortunate school. They counseled and reprimanded and laughed at me, when needful, in a way that I should not have tolerated from boys at that time, nor yet from my own sisters, wise and judicious though these were. Added to all this was a fortunate visit, during my last year in college, to some cousins on a Virginia plantation, where my uncle, Major Storrow, had married into the

Carter family, and where I experienced the hospitality and gracious ways of Southern life.

A potent influence was also preparing for me in Cambridge in a peculiarly fascinating circle of young people, — more gifted, I cannot help thinking, than any later coterie of the same kind, — which seemed to group itself round James Lowell and Maria White, his betrothed, who were known among the members as their "King and Queen." They called themselves "The Brothers and Sisters," being mainly made up in that way: the Whites of Watertown and their cousins the Thaxters; the Storys from Cambridge; the Hales and the Tuckermans from Boston; the Kings from Salem, and others. They had an immense and hilarious intimacy, rarely, however, for some reason, culminating in intermarriage; they read the same books, and had perpetual gatherings and picnics, their main headquarters being the large colonial house of the White family in Watertown. My own point of contact with them was remote, but real; my mother had removed, when her family lessened, to a smaller house built by my elder brother, and belonging in these latter days to Radcliffe College. This was next door to the Fay House of that institution, then occupied by Judge Fay. And as my friend Maria Fay was a cousin of some of

the Brothers and Sisters, they made the house an occasional rendezvous; and as there were attractive younger kindred whom I chanced to know, I was able at least to look through the door of this paradise of youth.

Lowell's first volume had just been published, and all its allusions were ground of romance for us all; indeed, he and his betrothed were to me, as they seemed to be for those of their circle, a modernized Petrarch and Laura or even Dante and Beatrice; and I watched them with unselfish reverence. Their love-letters, about which they were extremely frank, were passed from hand to hand, and sometimes reached me through Thaxter. I have some of Maria White's ballads in her own handwriting; and I still know by heart a letter which she wrote to Thaxter, about the delay in her marriage, — "It is easy enough to be married; the newspaper corners show us that, every day; but to live and to be happy as simple King and Queen, without the gifts of fortune, this is a triumph that suits my nature better." Probably all the atmosphere around this pair of lovers had a touch of exaggeration, a slight greenhouse aroma, but it brought a pure and ennobling enthusiasm; and whenever I was fortunate enough to hear Maria White sing or "say" ballads in moonlight evenings it

seemed as if I were in Boccaccio's Florentine gardens.

If this circle of bright young people was not strictly a part of the Transcendental Movement, it was yet born of "the Newness." Lowell and Story, indeed, both wrote for "The Dial," and Maria White had belonged to Margaret Fuller's classes. There was, moreover, passing through the whole community a wave of that desire for a freer and more ideal life which made Story turn aside from his father's profession to sculpture, and made Lowell forsake law after his first client. It was the time when Emerson wrote to Carlyle, "We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform; not a reading man but has a draft of a new community in his waistcoat pocket." I myself longed at times to cut free from prescribed bondage, and not, in Lowell's later phrase, to "pay so much of life for a living" as seemed to be expected. I longed anew, under the influence of George Sand and of Mrs. Child's "Letters from New York," to put myself on more equal terms with that vast army of hand-workers who were ignorant of much that I knew, yet could do so much that I could not.

Under these combined motives I find that I carefully made out, at one time, a project of going into the cultivation of peaches, an in-

dustry then prevalent in New England, but now practically abandoned, — thus securing freedom from study and thought by moderate labor of the hands. This was in 1843, two years before Thoreau tried a similar project with beans at Walden Pond; and also before the time when George and Burrill Curtis undertook to be farmers at Concord. A like course was actually adopted and successfully pursued through life by another Harvard man a few years older than myself, the late Marston Watson, of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Such things were in the air, and even those who were not swerved by "the Newness" from their intended pursuits were often greatly modified as to the way in which these were undertaken; as when the recognized leader of a certain class of the Harvard Law School abandoned, from conscientious scruples, the career of a practicing lawyer, and spent his life as a conveyancer.

What turned me away from the study of the law was not this moral scruple, but what was doubtless an innate preference, strengthened by the influence of one man and one or two books. After leaving college I taught for six months as usher in the boarding-school at Jamaica Plain, kept by Mr. Stephen Minot Weld; and then, greatly to my satisfaction, became private tutor to the three young sons of my

cousin, Stephen Higginson Perkins, a Boston merchant, residing in a pretty cottage which he had designed for himself in Brookline. In him I encountered the most attractive man I had yet met and the one who was most to influence me. He was indeed a person of unique qualities and great gifts; he was in the prime of life, handsome and refined, a widower, whose modest household was superintended by a maiden sister; his training had been utterly unlike my regular academical career; he had been sent to Germany to school, under the guidance of Edward Everett, then to the East and West Indies as supercargo, then into business, but not very successfully as yet. This pursuit he hated and disapproved; all his tastes were for art, in which he was at that time perhaps the best connoisseur in Boston, and he had contrived by strict economy to own several good paintings which he bequeathed later to the Boston Art Museum, — a Reynolds, a Van der Velde, and a remarkable oil copy of the Sistine Madonna by Moritz Retzsch. These were the first fine paintings I had ever seen, except the Copleys then in the Harvard College Library, and his society, with that he assembled round him, was to me a wholly new experience. He disapproved and distrusted all classical training, and was indifferent to mathematics; but he

had read largely in French and German literature, and he introduced me to authors of permanent interest, such as Heine and Paul Louis Courier. He was also in a state of social revolt, enhanced by a certain shyness and by deafness; full of theories, and ready to encourage all independent thinking. He was withal affectionate and faithful.

I was to teach his boys four hours a day, — no more; they were most interesting, though not always easy to manage. I was young enough to take a ready part in all their sports, and we often had school in the woods adjoining the house, perhaps sitting in large trees and interrupting work occasionally to watch a weasel gliding over a rock or a squirrel in the boughs. I took the boys with me in my rambles and it was a happy time. Another sister of Stephen Perkins's, a woman of great personal attractions, kept house for her father, who lived near by, Mr. Samuel G. Perkins, younger brother of Colonel Thomas H. Perkins, then the leading merchant of Boston. Mr. Samuel Perkins had been at one time a partner of my grandfather and had married his daughter, but had retired, not very successful, and was one of the leading horticulturists near Boston, the then famous "Boston nectarine" being a fruit of his introducing. His wife, Barbara Higgin-

son, my aunt, had been a belle in her youth, but had ripened into an oddity, and lived in Boston during the winter and in a tiny cottage at Nahant during the summer, for the professed reason that the barberry blossoms in the Brookline lanes made her sneeze.

The summer life around Boston was then an affair so unlike anything now to be found in the vicinity as to seem like something observed in another country or period. Socially speaking, it more resembled the plantation life of the South or the ranch life of the West. Many of the prosperous people lived in Boston all summer, with occasional trips to Nahant or Saratoga or Ballston, or for the more adventurous a journey by stage among the White Mountains, encountering rough roads and still rougher taverns. But there existed all around Boston, and especially in Roxbury, Brookline, and Milton, a series of large estates with ample houses, all occupied by people connected in blood or intimacy, who drove about and exchanged calls in summer afternoons. Equipages were simple; people usually drove themselves; there were no liveries, but the hospitality was profuse. My uncle Perkins was a poor man compared with his rich brother; there was a theory that his beautiful pears and nectarines were to be a source of profit, but I fear that the bal-

ance-sheet, if perchance there ever was any, would have shown otherwise. No matter, he had the frank outdoor hospitality of a retired East India merchant, which he was; every afternoon, at a certain hour, sherry and madeira were set out on the sideboard in the airy parlor, with pears, peaches, grapes, nectarines, strawberries and the richest cream, and we knew that visitors would arrive. Cousins and friends came, time-honored acquaintances of the head of the house, eminent public men, Mr. Prescott the historian, or Daniel Webster himself, received like a king. Never did I feel a greater sense of an honor conferred than when that regal black-browed man once selected me as the honored messenger to bring more cream for his chocolate.

There was sometimes, though rarely, a little music; and there were now and then simple games on the lawn, — battledore or grace-hoops, — but as yet croquet and tennis and golf were not, and the resources were limited. In winter, the same houses were the scene of family parties with sleigh-riding and skating and coasting; but the summer life was simply a series of outdoor receptions, from house to house. It must be noted that Brookline was then, as now, the garden suburb of Boston, beyond all others; the claim was only compara-

tive, and would not at all stand the test of English gardening or even of our modern methods, except perhaps in the fruit produced. I remember that Stephen Perkins once took an English visitor, newly arrived, to drive about the region, and he was quite ready to admire everything he saw, though not quite for the reason that his American host expected. "It is all so rough and wild" was his comment.

Into this summer life, on the invitation of my cousin Barbara Channing, who spent much time in Brookline, there occasionally came delegations of youths from Brook Farm, then flourishing. Among these were George and Burrill Curtis, and Larned, with Charles Dana, late editor of the "New York Sun;" all presentable and agreeable, but the first three peculiarly costumed. It was then very common for young men in college and elsewhere to wear what were called blouses, — a kind of hunter's frock made at first of brown holland belted at the waist, — these being gradually developed into garments of gay-colored chintz, sometimes, it was said, an economical transformation of their sisters' skirts or petticoats. All the young men of this party except Dana wore these gay garments and bore on their heads little round and visorless caps with tassels. Mr. Perkins, whose attire was always defiantly plain, re-

garded these vanities with ill-concealed disapproval, but took greatly to Dana, who dressed like a well-to-do young farmer and was always handsome and manly. My uncle declared him to be full of sense and knowledge, and the others to be nonsensical creatures. Dana was indeed the best all-round man at Brook Farm, — a good teacher, editor, and farmer, — but was held not to be quite so zealous or unselfish for the faith as were some of the others. It was curious that when their public meetings were held in Boston, he was their most effective speaker, while I cannot remember that George William Curtis, afterwards so eloquent, ever opened his lips at all.

I was but twice at Brook Farm, once driving over there in a sleigh during a snowstorm, to convey my cousin Barbara to a fancy ball at "the Community," as it was usually called, where she was to appear in a pretty creole dress made of madras handkerchiefs and brought by Stephen Perkins from the West Indies. She was a most attractive and popular person, and was enthusiastic about Brook Farm, where she went often, being a friend of Mrs. Ripley, who was its "leading lady." Again I once went for her in summer and stayed for an hour, watching the various interesting figures, including George William Curtis, who was walking

about in shirtsleeves, with his boots over his trousers, yet was escorting a young maiden with that elegant grace which never left him. It was a curious fact that he, who was afterwards so eminent, was then held wholly secondary in interest to his handsome brother Burrill, whose Raphaelesque face won all hearts, and who afterwards disappeared from view in England, surviving only in memory as Our Cousin the Curate, in "Lotus-Eating." But if I did not see much of Brook Farm on the spot, I met its members frequently at the series of exciting meetings for Social Reform in Boston, where the battle raged high between Associationists and Communists, the leader of the latter being John A. Collins. Defenders of the established order also took part; one of the best of the latter being Arthur Pickering, a Boston merchant; and in all my experience I have never heard a speech so thrilling and effective as that in which Henry Clapp, then a young radical mechanic, answered Pickering's claim that individuality was better promoted by the existing method of competition. Clapp was afterwards the admired leader of a Bohemian clique in New York and had a melancholy career; but that speech did more than anything else to make me at least a halfway socialist for life.

The Brook Farm people were also to be met

occasionally at Mrs. Harrington's confectionery shop in School Street, where they took economical refreshments; and still oftener at Miss Elizabeth Peabody's foreign bookstore in West Street, which was a part of the educational influences of the period. It was an atom of a shop, partly devoted to the homœopathic medicines of her father, a physician; and she alone in Boston, I think, had French and German books for sale. There I made further acquaintance with Cousin and Jouffroy, with Constant's "De la Religion" and Leroux' "De l'Humanité," the relics of the French Eclecticism, then beginning to fade, but still taught in colleges. There, too, were Schubert's "Geschichte der Seele" and many of the German balladists who were beginning to enthrall me. There was also Miss Peabody herself, desultory, dreamy, but insatiable in her love for knowledge and for helping others to it. James Freeman Clarke said of her that she was always engaged in supplying some want that had first to be created; it might be Dr. Kraitsir's lectures on language, or General Bem's historical chart. She always preached the need, but never accomplished the supply until she advocated the kindergarten; there she caught up with her mission and came to identify herself with its history. She lived to be very old, and with her broad benevolent

face and snowy curls was known to many as "The Grandmother of Boston." I best associate her with my last interview, a little before her death, when I chanced to pick her out of a snowdrift into which she had sunk overwhelmed during a furious snowsquall, while crossing a street in Boston. I did not know her until she had scrambled up with much assistance, and recognizing me at once, fastened on my offered arm, saying breathlessly, "I am so glad to see you. I have been wishing to talk to you about Sarah Winnemucca. Now Sarah Winnemucca" — and she went on discoursing as peacefully about a maligned Indian protégée as if she were strolling in some sequestered moonlit lane, on a summer evening.

I have said that the influence wrought upon me by Brookline life was largely due to one man and one or two writers. The writer who took possession of me, after Emerson, was the German author, Jean Paul Richter, whose memoirs had just been written by a Brookline lady, Mrs. Thomas Lee. This biography set before me, just at the right time, the attractions of purely literary life, carried on in a perfectly unworldly spirit; and his story of "Siebenkäs," just then opportunely translated, presented the same thing in a more graphic way. From that moment poverty, or at least

extreme economy, had no terrors for me, and I could not bear the thought of devoting my life to the technicalities of Blackstone. Not that the law-book had failed to interest me, — for it was a book, — but I could not consent to surrender my life to what it represented, nor have I ever repented that decision. I felt instinctively what the late Dwight Foster said to me long after : " The objection to the study of the law is not that it is not interesting, — for it is eminently so, — but that it fills your mind with knowledge which cannot be carried into another stage of existence." Long after this, moreover, my classmate Durant, at the height of his professional success, once stoutly denied to me that there was any real interest to be found in legal study. " The law," he said, " is simply a system of fossilized injustice ; there is not enough of intellectual interest about it to occupy an intelligent mind for an hour." This I do not believe ; and he was probably not the highest authority ; yet his remark and Judge Foster's always helped me to justify to myself that early choice.

With all this social and intellectual occupation, much of my Brookline life was lonely and meditative ; my German romances made me a dreamer, and I spent much time in the woods, nominally botanizing but in reality try-

ing to adjust myself, being still only nineteen or twenty, to the problems of life. One favorite place was Hammond's Pond, then celebrated among botanists as the only locality for the beautiful *Andromeda polifolia*, so named by Linnæus because, like the fabled Andromeda, it dwelt in wild regions only. The pond was, and I believe still is, surrounded by deep woods and overhung by a hill covered with moss-grown fragments of rock, among which the pink *Cypripedium* or lady's slipper used to grow profusely. The Andromeda was on the other side of the lake, and some one had left a leaky boat there, which I used to borrow and paddle across the dark water, past a cedar forest which lined it on one side, and made me associate it with the gloomy Mummelsee of one of my beloved German ballads by August Schnezler:—

> "Amid the gloomy Mummelsee
> Do live the palest lilies many.
> All day they droop so drowsily
> In azure air or rainy,
> But when the dreadful moon of night
> Rains down on earth its yellow light,
> Up spring they, full of lightness,
> In woman's form and brightness."

My lilies were as pale and as abundant as any German lake could ever boast; and among them there was to be seen motionless the black prow of some old boat which had sunk at its

moorings and looked so uncanny that I never would row near it. Above the lake a faint path wound up the hill among the rocks, and at the summit there was a large detached boulder with a mouldering ladder reaching its top, where I used to climb and rest after my long rambling. Close by there was one dead pine-tree of the older growth towering above the younger trees; and sometimes a homeward faring robin or crow would perch and rest there as I was resting, or the sweet bell of the Newton Theological Seminary on its isolated hill would peal out what seemed like the Angelus.

What with all these dreamings, and the influence of Jean Paul and Heine, the desire for a free life of study, and perhaps of dreams, grew so strong upon me that I decided to go back to Cambridge as "resident graduate," — there was then no graduate school, — and establish myself as cheaply as possible, to live after my own will. I was already engaged to be married to one of the Brookline cousins, but I had taken what my mother called "the vow of poverty," and was willing to risk the future. Mrs. Farrar, an old friend of the family, with whom I had spent a part of the summer before entering college, reported with satisfaction that she had met me one day driving my own small

wagon-load of furniture over muddy roads from Brookline to Cambridge, like any emigrant lad, whereas the last time she had seen me before was at the opera in Boston, with soiled white kid gloves on. Never was I happier in my life than at that moment of transformation when she saw me. It was my Flight into Egypt.

I established myself in the cheapest room I could find, in a house then called "College House," and standing on part of the ground now occupied by the block of that name. Its familiar appellation in Cambridge was "The Old Den," and my only housemate at first was an eccentric law student, or embryo lawyer, popularly known as "Light-House Thomas," because he had fitted himself for college in one of those edifices. Here at last I could live in my own way, making both ends meet by an occasional pupil, and enjoying the same freedom which Thoreau, then unknown to me, was afterwards to possess in his hut. I did not know exactly what I wished to study in Cambridge; indeed, I went there to find out. Perhaps I had some vague notion of preparing myself for a professorship in literature or mathematics and metaphysics, but in the mean time I read, as Emerson says of Margaret Fuller, "at a rate like Gibbon's." There was the obstacle to be faced, which has indeed

always proved too much for me, — the enormous wealth of the world of knowledge, and the stupendous variety of that which I wished to know. Doubtless the modern elective system, or even a wise teacher, would have helped me; they would have compelled me to concentration, but perhaps I may have absolutely needed some such period of intellectual wild oats. This was in September, 1843.

I read in that year, and a subsequent similar year, the most desultory and disconnected books, the larger the better: Newton's "Principia" and Whewell's "Mechanical Euclid;" Ritter's "History of Ancient Philosophy;" Sismondi's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;" Lamennais' "Paroles d'un Croyant" and "Livre du Peuple;" Homer and Hesiod; Linnæus's "Correspondence;" Emerson over and over. Fortunately I kept up outdoor life also and learned the point where books and nature meet; learned that Chaucer belongs to spring, German romance to summer nights, Amadis de Gaul and the Morte d'Arthur to the Christmas time; and found that books of natural history, in Thoreau's phrase, "furnish the cheerfulest winter reading." Bettine Brentano and Günderode — the correspondence between the two maidens being just then translated by Margaret Fuller — also fascinated me; and I have seldom been

happier than when I spent two summer days beside the Rhine, many years after, in visiting the very haunts where Bettine romanced, and the spot where Günderode died.

I tried to read all night occasionally, as Lowell told me he had sometimes done, and as a mathematical classmate of mine had done weekly, to my envy; but sleepiness and the morning chill soon checked this foolish enterprise. On one of these nights I had an experience so nearly incredible that I scarcely dare to tell it, yet it was, I believe, essentially true. Sitting up till four one morning over a volume of Lamennais, I left the mark at an unfinished page, having to return the book to the college library. A year after I happened to take the book from the library again, got up at four o'clock to read, began where I left off, and afterwards, — not till afterwards, — looking in my diary, found that I had simply skipped a precise year and gone on with the passage.

I continued to teach myself German on a preposterous plan brought forward in those days by a learned Hungarian, Dr. Charles Kraitsir, who had a theory of the alphabet, and held that by its means all the Indo-European languages could be resolved into one; so that we could pass from each to another by an effort of will, like the process of mind-healing.

Tried on the German ballads this method proved very seductive, but when one went a step farther it turned out very superficial; as is therefore all my knowledge of German, though I have read a good deal of it. All this way of living was intellectually very risky, as is the process of "boarding one's self" — which I have also tried — for the body; and I am glad to have come with no more serious injury through them both. For a specialist this course would have been disastrous, but I was plainly not destined for a specialist; for a predestined essayist and public speaker, it was not so bad, since to him nothing comes amiss. Fortunately it was a period when a tonic influence and a cohesive restraint came from a wholly different direction; indeed, I might say from two directions.

The first of these influences was the renewal of my acquaintance with Lowell, which had been waived during my two years' stay in Brookline. He recognized in Thaxter, who about this time went to New York to study for the dramatic profession, and in myself, two of his stoutest advocates. We met a little more on a level than before; the difference of nearly five years which had formerly made him only my elder brother's crony was now becoming less important, and I found myself approaching

that maturer period which a clever woman defined as "the age of everybody." To be sure, I could recall the time when my brother had come home one evening with the curt remark, "Jim Lowell doubts whether he shall really be a lawyer, after all; he thinks he shall be a poet." Now that poet was really launched, and indeed was "the best launched man of his time," as Willis said. I used to go to his room and to read books he suggested, such as Puttenham's "Arte of Poesie," and Chapman's plays. He did most of the talking; it was a way he had; but he was always original and trenchant, though I sometimes rebelled inwardly at his very natural attitude of leadership. We occasionally walked out together, late in the evening, from Emerson's lectures or the concerts which were already introducing Beethoven. Sometimes there was a reception after the lecture, usually at the rooms of a youth who was an ardent Fourierite, and had upon his door a blazing sun, with gilded rays emanating in all directions, and bearing the motto "Universal Unity." Beneath this appeared a neat black-and-white inscription, thus worded: "Please wipe your feet."

Our evening walks from Boston were delightful; and Longfellow's poem of "The Bridge" does little more than put into verse the thoughts

they inspired. The walk was then, as is certainly not now the case, a plunge into darkness; and there is no other point from which the transformation of the older Boston is more conspicuous. You now cross the bridge at night through a circle of radiant lights glancing in brilliant lines through all the suburbs; but in the old nights there was here and there in the distance a dim oil lamp; in time oil gave place to kerosene; then came gas, then electricity, and still the brighter the lamps, the more they multiplied. The river itself was different; there were far more vessels, and I have myself been hailed on the bridge and offered money to pilot a coasting schooner to Watertown. Seals also came above the wharves and gave Lowell the material for one of his best stories, but one which he never, I think, quite ventured to print. He saw two farmer lads watching from the bridge one of these visitors as he played in the water. "Wal, neaow," said one of the youths, "be them kind o' critters common up this way, do ye suppose? Be they — or be they?" "Wal," responded the other, "dunno's they be, and dunno ez they be." This perfect flower of New England speech, twin blossoms on one stem, delighted Lowell hugely; and it was so unexampled in my own experience that it always inspired in me a slight dis-

trust, as being too good to be true. Perhaps it created a little envy, as was the case with Albert Dicey, when he and James Bryce first visited America, and I met them at a dinner party in Newport. Dicey came in, rubbing his hands, and saying with eagerness, "Bryce is very happy; at the Ocean House he has just heard a man say Eurōpean twice!"

Another and yet more tonic influence, though Lowell was already an ardent Abolitionist, came from the presence of reformatory agitation in the world outside. There were always public meetings in Boston to be attended; there were social reform gatherings where I heard the robust Orestes Brownson and my eloquent cousin William Henry Channing; there were anti-slavery conventions, with Garrison and Phillips; then on Sunday there were Theodore Parker and James Freeman Clarke, to show that one might accomplish something and lead a manly life even in the pulpit. My betrothed was one of the founders of Clarke's Church of the Disciples, and naturally drew me there; the services were held in a hall and were quite without those merely ecclesiastical associations which were then unattractive to me, and have never yet, I fear, quite asserted their attraction. I learned from Clarke the immense value of simplicity of statement and

perfect straightforwardness of appeal; but in the direction of pure thought and advanced independence of opinion, Theodore Parker was my teacher. To this day I sometimes dream of going to hear him preach, — the great, free, eager congregation; the strong, serious, commanding presence of the preacher; his reverent and earnest prayer; his comprehensive hour-long sermon full of sense, knowledge, feeling, courage, he being not afraid even of his own learning, absolutely holding his audience in the hollow of his hand. Once in New York a few years ago I went to Dr. Rainsford's church and felt for a moment or two — not, indeed, while the surpliced choir was singing — that I was again in the hands of Theodore Parker.

Under the potent influences of Parker and Clarke I found myself gravitating toward what was then called the "liberal" ministry; one very much secularized it must be, I foresaw, to satisfy me. Even in this point of view my action was regarded rather askance by some of my more strenuous transcendental friends, even George William Curtis expressing a little disapproval; though in later years he himself took to the pulpit, — in a yet more secular fashion, to be sure, — a good while after I had left it. I had put myself meanwhile in somewhat the

position of that backsliding youth at Concord of whom some feminine friend said anxiously, "I am troubled about Eben; he used to be a real Come-Outer, interested in all the reforms; but now he smokes and swears and goes to church, and is just like any other young man." Yet I resolved to risk even this peril, removed my modest belongings to Divinity Hall, and bought one of those very Hebrew Bibles which my father had once criticised as having their title-pages at the wrong end.

## IV

### THE REARING OF A REFORMER

Some years before the time when I entered the Harvard Divinity School, it had been described by the Rev. Dr. J. G. Palfrey, then its dean, as being made up of mystics, skeptics, and dyspeptics. This, being interpreted, really meant that the young men there assembled were launched on that wave of liberal thought which, under Emerson and Parker, was rapidly submerging the old landmarks. For myself, I was wholly given over to the newer phase of thought, and after a year of unchartered freedom was ready to concentrate my reading a little and follow the few appointed lines of study which the school then required. The teachers were men quite worth knowing; and Dr. Convers Francis, especially, had a noted library and as dangerous a love of miscellaneous reading as my own. Accordingly, during the first year I kept up that perilous habit, and at the end of this time stayed out of the school for another year of freedom, returning only for the necessary final terms. There had just been a large

accession of books at the college library, and from that and the Francis collection I had a full supply. I read Comte and Fourier, Strauss's "Life of Jesus" (a French translation), and bought by economy a fine folio copy of Cudworth's "Intellectual System," on which I used to browse at all odd hours — keeping it open on a standing desk. I read Mill's "Logic," Whewell's "Inductive Sciences," Landor's "Gebir" and "Imaginary Conversations." Maria Lowell lent me also Landor's "Pentameron," a book with exquisite passages; Alford's poems, then new, and, as she said, "valuable for their simplicity;" and the fiery German lays of Hoffmann von Fallersleben, some of which I translated, as was also the case with poems from Rückert and Freiligrath, besides making a beginning at a version of the Swedish epic "Frithiof's Saga," which Longfellow admired, and of Fredrika Bremer's novel, "The H—— Family." I returned to Homer and Dante in the originals, and read something of Plato in Cousin's French translation, with an occasional reference to the Greek text.

Some verses were contributed by me, as well as by my sister Louisa, at various times, to "The Harbinger," published at Brook Farm and edited by the late Charles A. Dana. My first poem, suggested by the fine copy of the Sistine

Madonna which had been my housemate at Brookline, had, however, been printed in "The Present," a short-lived magazine edited by my cousin, William Henry Channing; the verses being afterward, to my great delight, reprinted by Professor Longfellow in his "Estray." My first prose, also, had appeared in "The Present," — an enthusiastic review of Mrs. Child's "Letters from New York," then eagerly read by us young Transcendentalists. I dipped ardently, about that time, into the easier aspects of German philosophy, reading Fichte's "Bestimmung des Menschen" (Destiny of Man) with delight, and Schelling's "Vorlesungen über die Methode des Akademische Studiums" (Lectures on Academical Study). The influence of these authors was also felt through Coleridge's "Literary Remains," of which I was very fond, and in "Vital Dynamics," by Dr. Green, Coleridge's friend and physician. A more perilous book was De Quincey's "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," which doubtless created more of such slaves than it liberated: I myself was led to try some guarded experiments in that direction, which had happily no effect, and I was glad to abandon them. It seems, in looking back, a curious escapade for one who had a natural dislike for all stimulants and narcotics and had felt no temptation of that kind; I probably

indulged the hope of stimulating my imagination.

My mother and sisters having now left Cambridge, I rarely went to any house there, except sometimes to Lowell's, where his sweet wife now presided over the upper story of his father's large abode. She kept things as orderly as she could; always cruising like Admiral Van Tromp, Lowell said, with a broom at her mast-head. She had fitted the rooms with pretty devices, and rocked her baby in a cradle fashioned from a barrel cut lengthways, placed on rockers, and upholstered by herself. At its foot she painted three spears as the Lowell crest and three lilies for her own, with the motto "Puritas Potestas." This was for their first child, whose early death both Lowell and Longfellow mourned in song. The Lowells sometimes saw company in a modest way, and I remember spending an evening there with Ole Bull and John Weiss. Dr. Lowell, the father, was yet living, always beneficent and attractive; he still sometimes preached in the college chapel, and won all undergraduate hearts by providing only fifteen-minute sermons.

If I belonged in the first two categories of Dr. Palfrey's classification of the Divinity School, I happily kept clear of the third, never having been a dyspeptic, though I lived literally

on bread and milk during the greater part of a year, for purposes of necessary economy and the buying of books. I kept up habits of active exercise, played football and baseball, and swam in the river in summer. There was then an attention paid to the art of swimming such as is not now observable; the college maintained large bath-houses where now are coal-yards, and we used to jump or dive from the roofs, perhaps twenty feet high; we had a Danish student named Stallknecht, who could swim a third of the way across the river under water, and we vainly tried to emulate him. In winter there was skating on Fresh Pond. I must not forget to add that at all seasons I took long walks with Edward Tuckerman, then the most interesting man about Cambridge, leading a life which seemed to us like that of an Oxford don, and already at work on his Latin treatise on lichens. His room was a delightful place to visit, — a large chamber in a rambling old house, with three separate reading-tables, one for botany, one for the study of Coleridge, and one for the Greek drama. He was the simplest-hearted of men, shy, near-sighted, and lovable; the tragedy of whose life was that his cruel father had sent him to Union College instead of to Harvard; a loss he made up by staying years at the latter, graduating succes-

sively at the Law School and the Divinity School, and finally taking his degree in the undergraduate department at what seemed to us a ripe old age.

Another tonic in the way of cultured companionship was that of James Elliot Cabot, fresh from a German university, — then a rare experience, — he being, however, most un-German in clearness and terseness. I remember that when I complained to him of not understanding Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," in English, he answered tranquilly that he could not; that having read it twice in German he had thought he comprehended it, but that Meiklejohn's translation was beyond making out. These men were not in the Divinity School, but I met their equals there. The leading men of a college class gravitated then as naturally to the Divinity School as now to the Law School; even though, like myself, they passed to other pursuits afterward. I met there such men as Thomas Hill, afterward President of Harvard; Octavius B. Frothingham; William R. Alger; Samuel Longfellow and Samuel Johnson, who compiled at Divinity Hall their collection of hymns, — a volume called modestly "A Book of Hymns," and more profanely named from its editors' familiar names "The Sam Book." Longfellow was one of the born saints, but with a breadth

and manliness not always to be found in that class; he was also a genuine poet, like his elder brother, whose biographer he afterward became. Johnson, a man of brilliant gifts and much personal charm, is now best known by his later work on "Oriental Religions." It is a curious fact that many of their youthful hymns as well as some of my own, appearing originally in this heterodox work, have long since found their way into the most orthodox and respectable collections.

Two of the most interesting men in the Divinity School were afterward, like myself, in military service during the Civil War. One of them was James Richardson, whom Frothingham described later as "a brilliant wreath of fire-mist, which seemed every moment to be on the point of becoming a star, but never did." He enlisted as a private soldier and died in hospital, where he had been detailed as nurse. The other had been educated at West Point, and had served in the Florida Indian wars; he was strikingly handsome and mercilessly opinionated; he commanded the first regiment of heavy artillery raised in Massachusetts, did much for the defense of Washington in the early days of the Civil War, and resigned his commission when Governor Andrew refused to see justice done — as he thought — to one

of his subordinates. His name was William Batcheldor Greene.

But all these companionships were wholly secondary to one which was for me most memorable, and brought joy for a few years and sorrow for many. Going through the doors of Divinity Hall I met one day a young man so handsome in his dark beauty that he seemed like a picturesque Oriental; slender, keen-eyed, raven-haired, he arrested the eye and the heart like some fascinating girl. This was William Hurlbert (originally Hurlbut), afterward the hero of successive novels, — Kingsley's "Two Years Ago," Winthrop's "Cecil Dreeme," and my own "Malbone," — as well as of actual events stranger than any novels. He was the breaker, so report said, of many hearts, the disappointer of many high hopes, — and this in two continents; he was the most variously gifted and accomplished man I have ever known, acquiring knowledge as by magic, — passing easily for a Frenchman in France, an Italian in Italy, a Spaniard in Spanish countries; beginning his career as a radical young Unitarian divine, and ending it as a defender of despotism. He was also for a time a Roman Catholic, but died in the Church of England.

The turning-point of Hurlbert's life occurred, for me at least, when I met him once, to my

great delight, at Centre Harbor, I being on my way to the White Mountains and he returning thence. We had several hours together, and went out on the lake for a long chat. He told me that he had decided to go to New York and enter the office of A. Oakey Hall, a lawyer against whom there was then, justly or unjustly, some prejudice. I expressed surprise and perhaps regret; and he said frankly, "It is the parting of the ways with me, and I feel it to be necessary. I have made up my mind that I cannot live the simple and moderate life you and my other friends live in New England; I must have a larger field, and more of the appliances and even luxuries of existence." This recalls what the latest biographer of Bayard Taylor has said of him: "The men of New England were satisfied with plain homes and simple living, and were content with the small incomes of professional life. Taylor had other aims. . . . Involved in the expense of Cedarcroft, he never knew the enormous value of freedom."

There was nothing intrinsically wrong in the impulse of either, but the ambition brought failure to both, though Taylor, with the tradition of a Quaker ancestry, and with less of perilous personal fascination, escaped the moral deterioration and the social scandals which be-

set Hurlbert, as well as his utter renunciation of all his early convictions. Yet the charm always remained in Hurlbert's case. When we met at Centre Harbor, I remember, he was summoned from dinner on some question about stage arrangements; and the moment he had shut the door a lady of cultivated appearance got up hastily from her chair and came round where I was sitting. She said breathlessly, "Can you tell me who that is? We came here in the stage with him, and he has been perfectly delightful. I never saw such a man: he knows all languages, talks upon all subjects; my daughter and I cannot rest without knowing who he is." I did not even learn the lady's name, but years after I met her again, and she recalled the interview; time for her had only confirmed the instantaneous impression which Hurlbert made, — the whole thing suggesting a similar story about Edmund Burke.

In Burke's case it was apparently a matter of pure intellect, but in Hurlbert's it was due largely to the constitutional and invariable impulse to attract and charm. I am told — for I had utterly forgotten it — that I myself said of him in those days, "He could not stop to buy an apple of an old woman on the sidewalk without leaving her with the impression that she alone had really touched his heart."

I have known many gifted men on both sides of the Atlantic, but I still regard Hurlbert as unequaled among them all for natural brilliancy; even Lowell was not his peer. Nor can I be convinced that he was — as President Walker once said to me, when I urged Hurlbert's appointment, about 1850, as professor of history at Harvard — "a worthless fellow." Among many things which were selfish and unscrupulous there must have been something deeper to have called out the warm affection created by him in both sexes. I strongly suspect that if, after twenty years of non-intercourse, he had written to me to come and nurse him in illness, I should have left all and gone. Whatever may have been his want of moral principle, he certainly had the power not merely of inspiring affection, but of returning it. I know, for instance, that while borrowing money right and left, he never borrowed of me, — not that I had then much to lend; if he helped himself to my books and other small matters as if they were his own, he was not an atom more chary of the possessions that were his; and I recall one occasion when he left a charming household in Boston and came out to Cambridge, in the middle of a winter vacation, on purpose to have a fire ready for me in my room on my return from a journey. I think it was

on that very evening that he read aloud to me from Krummacher's "Parables," a book then much liked among us, — selecting that fine tale describing the gradual downfall of a youth of unbounded aspirations, which the author sums up with the terse conclusion, "But the name of that youth is not mentioned among the poets of Greece." It was thus with Hurlbert when he died, although his few poems in "Putnam's Magazine" — "Borodino," "Sorrento," and the like — seemed to us the dawn of a wholly new genius; and I remember that when the cool and keen-sighted Whittier read his "Gan Eden," he said to me that one who had written that could write anything he pleased. Yet the name of the youth was not mentioned among the poets; and the utter indifference with which the announcement of his death was received was a tragic epitaph upon a wasted life.

Thanks to a fortunate home training and the subsequent influence of Emerson and Parker, I held through all my theological studies a sunny view of the universe, which has lasted me as well, amid the storms of life, so far as I can see, as the more prescribed and conventional forms of faith might have done. We all, no doubt, had our inner conflicts, yet mine never related to opinions, but to those problems of heart and emotion which come to every young

person, and upon which it is not needful to dwell. Many of my fellow students, however, had just broken away from a sterner faith, whose shattered eggshells still clung around them. My friend of later years, David Wasson, used to say that his health was ruined for life by two struggles: first by the way in which he got into the church during a revival, and then by the way he got out of it as a reformer. This I escaped, and came out in the end with the radical element so much stronger than the sacerdotal, that I took for the title of my address at the graduating exercises "The Clergy and Reform." I remember that I had just been reading Horne's farthing epic of Orion, and had an ambitious sentence in my address, comparing the spirit of the age to that fabled being, first blinded, and then fixing his sightless eyes upon the sun that they might be set free once more. Probably it was crude enough, but Theodore Parker liked it, and so I felt as did the brave Xanthus, described by Landor, who only remembered that in the heat of the battle Pericles smiled on him. I was asked to preach as a candidate before the First Religious Society at Newburyport, a church two hundred years old, then ostensibly of the Unitarian faith, but bearing no denominational name. Receiving a farther invitation after trial, I went

there to begin my professional career, if such it could properly be called.

There was something very characteristic of my mother in a little incident which happened in connection with my first visit to Newburyport. I had retained enough affection for the opinion of Boston drawing-rooms to have devised for myself a well-cut overcoat of gray tweed, with a cap of the same material trimmed with fur. My elder sisters naturally admired me in this garb, but implored me not to wear it to Newburyport. "So unclerical," they said; it would ruin my prospects. "Let him wear it, by all means," said my wiser mother. "If they cannot stand that clothing, they can never stand its wearer." Her opinion properly prevailed; and I was perhaps helped as much as hindered by this bit of lingering worldly vanity. The younger people expected some pleasant admixture of heresy about me, and it might as well begin in this way as in any other. Henry C. Wright, afterward a prominent Abolitionist, had lost his parish, a few miles above Newburyport, for the alleged indecorum of swimming across the Merrimack River.

My first actual proposal of innovation was in a less secular line, but was equally formidable. It was that I should be ordained as Theodore Parker had been, by the society itself: and

this all the more because my ancestor, Francis Higginson, had been ordained in that way — the first of all New England ordinations — in 1629. To this the society readily assented, at least so far as that there should be no ordaining council, and there was none. William Henry Channing preached one of his impassioned sermons, "The Gospel of To-Day," and all went joyously on, "youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm," not foreseeing the storms that were soon to gather, although any sagacious observer ought easily to have predicted them. It must be borne in mind that during all this period I was growing more, not less radical; my alienation from the established order was almost as great as that of Thoreau, though as yet I knew nothing of him except through "The Dial."

It must be remembered that two rather different elements combined to make up the so-called Transcendentalist body. There were the more refined votaries, who were indeed the most cultivated people of that time and place; but there was also a less educated contingent, known popularly as "Come-Outers," — a name then as familiar and distinctive as is that of the Salvation Army to-day. These were developed largely by the anti-slavery movement, which was not, like our modern civil service reform,

strongest in the more educated classes, but was predominantly a people's movement, based on the simplest human instincts, and far stronger for a time in the factories and shoe-shops than in the pulpits or colleges. The factories were still largely worked by American operatives, and the shoe manufacture was carried on in little shops, where the neighbors met and settled affairs of state, as may be read in Mr. Rowland Robinson's delightful stories called "Danvis Folks." Radicalism went with the smell of leather, and was especially active in such towns as Lynn and Abington, the centres of that trade. Even the least educated had recognized it in the form of the Second Advent delusion just then flourishing. All these influences combined to make the Come-Outer element very noticeable, — it being fearless, disinterested, and always self-asserting. It was abundant on Cape Cod, and the "Cape Codders" were a recognized subdivision at reform meetings. In such meetings or conventions these untaught disciples were often a source of obvious inconvenience: they defied chairmen, scaled platforms, out-roared exhorters. Some of them, as Emerson says, "devoted themselves to the worrying of clergymen;" proclaiming a gospel of freedom, I have heard them boast of having ascended into pulpits and trampled

across their cushions before horrified ministers. This was not a protest against religion, for they were rarely professed atheists, but against its perversions alone.

It must be remembered that the visible church in New England was not then the practical and reformatory body which it is to-day, — the change in the Episcopal Church being the most noticeable of all, — but that it devoted itself very largely to the "tithing of anise and cummin," as in Scripture times. Of the reforms prominent before the people, nearly all had originated outside the pulpit and even among avowed atheists. Thomas Herttell, a judge of the Marine Court of New York city, who belonged to that heretical class, was the first person in America, apparently, to write and print, in 1819, a strong appeal in behalf of total abstinence as the only remedy for intemperance; and the same man made, in 1837, in the New York Assembly, the first effort to secure to married women the property rights now generally conceded. All of us were familiar with the vain efforts of Garrison to enlist the clergy in the anti-slavery cause; and Stephen Foster, one of the stanchest of the early Abolitionists, habitually spoke of them as "the Brotherhood of Thieves." Lawyers and doctors, too, fared hard with those enthusiasts, and

merchants not much better; Edward Palmer writing against the use of money, and even such superior men as Alcott having sometimes a curious touch of the Harold Skimpole view of that convenience. It seems now rather remarkable that the institution of marriage did not come in for a share in the general laxity, but it did not; and it is to be observed that Henry James speaks rather scornfully of the Brook Farm community in this respect, as if its members must have been wanting in the courage of their convictions to remain so unreasonably chaste. I well remember that the contrary was predicted and expected by cynics, and the utter failure of their prophecies was the best tribute to the essential purity of the time. It was, like all seething periods, at least among the Anglo-Saxon race, a time of high moral purpose; and the anti-slavery movement, reaching its climax after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, was about to bring such qualities to a test.

This agitation, at any rate, was so far the leader in the reforms of the day that it brought to a focus all their picturesque ingredients. There were women who sat tranquilly knitting through a whole anti-slavery convention, however exciting, and who had that look of prolonged and self-controlled patience which we

associate with Sisters of Charity; and others who bore that uplifted and joyous serenity which now seems a part of the discipline of the Salvation lassies. There were always present those whom Emerson tersely classified as "men with beards;" this style, now familiar, being then an utter novelty, not tolerated in business or the professions, and of itself a committal to pronounced heresy. Partly as a result of this unwonted adornment, there were men who — as is indeed noticed in European Socialist meetings to-day — bore a marked resemblance to the accepted pictures of Jesus Christ. This trait was carried to an extent which the newspapers called "blasphemous" in Charles Burleigh, — a man of tall figure, benign face, and most persuasive tongue, wearing long auburn curls and somewhat tangled tempestuous beard. Lowell, whose own bearded condition marked his initiation into abolitionism, used to be amused when he went about with Burleigh and found himself jeered at as a new and still faltering disciple. Finally, there was the Hutchinson Family, with six or eight tall brothers clustered around the one rosebud of a sister, Abby: all natural singers and one might say actors, indeed unconscious *poseurs*, easily arousing torpid conventions with "The Car Emancipation" and such stirring melodies; or at times,

when encored, giving "The Bridge of Sighs," which seemed made for just the combination they presented. When, in this song, the circle of stalwart youths chanted, "Had she a sister?" or when the sweet Abby, looking up with dove-like eyes at her guardians, sang in response, "Or had she a brother?" it not only told its own story, but called up forcibly the infinite wrongs of the slave girls who had no such protectors, and who perhaps stood at that very moment, exposed and shrinking, on the auction-block.

On removing to Newburyport I found myself at once the associate of all that was most reputable in the town, in virtue of my functions; and also, by a fatality in temperament, of all that was most radical. There prevailed then a phrase, "the Sisterhood of Reforms," indicating a variety of social and physiological theories of which one was expected to accept all, if any. This I learned soon after my arrival, through the surprise expressed by some of my more radical friends at my unacquaintance with a certain family of factory operatives known as the "Briggs girls." "Not know the Briggs girls? I should think you would certainly know them. Work in the Globe Mills; interested in all the reforms; bathe in cold water every morning; one of 'em is a Grahamite,"—mean-

ing a disciple of vegetarianism; that faith being then a conspicuous part of "the Sisterhood of Reforms," but one against which I had been solemnly warned by William Henry Channing, who had made experiment of it while living as city missionary in New York city. He had gone, it seemed, to a boarding-house of the vegetarian faithful in the hope of finding spiritually minded associates, but was so woefully disappointed in the result that he left them after a while, falling back upon the world's people, as more carnal, possibly, but more companionable.

Without a tithe of my cousin's eloquence, I was of a cooler temperament, and perhaps kept my feet more firmly on the earth or was more guarded in my experiments. Yet I was gradually drawn into the temperance agitation, including prohibition; the peace movement, for which, I dare say, I pommeled as lustily as Schramm's pupils in Heine's "Reisebilder;" the social reform debate, which was sustained for some time after the downfall of Brook Farm; and of course the woman's rights movement, for whose first national convention I signed the call in 1850. Of all the movements in which I ever took part, except the anti-slavery agitation, this last-named seems to me the most important; nor have I ever wavered

in the opinion announced by Wendell Phillips, that it is "the grandest reform yet launched upon the century, as involving the freedom of one half the human race." Certainly the anti-slavery movement, which was by its nature a more temporary one, had the right of way, and must first be settled; it was, moreover, by its nature a much simpler movement. Once recognize the fact that man could have no right of property in man, and the whole affair was settled; there was nothing left but to agitate, and if needful to fight. But as Stuart Mill clearly pointed out, the very fact of the closer relations of the sexes had complicated the affair with a thousand perplexities in the actual working out; gave room for more blunders, more temporary disappointments, more extravagant claims, and far slower development.

It was in one respect fortunate that most of the early advocates of the Woman Suffrage reform had served previously as Abolitionists, for they had been thereby trained to courage and self-sacrifice; but it was in other respects unfortunate, because they had been accustomed to a stern and simple "Thus saith the Lord," which proved less applicable to the more complex question. When it came to the point, the alleged aversion of the slaves to freedom always vanished; I never myself encountered an

instance of it; every man, woman, and child, whatever protestations might have been made to the contrary, was eager to grasp at freedom; whereas in all communities there is a minority of women who are actively opposed to each successive step in elevating their condition, and this without counting the merely indifferent. All the ordinary objections to woman suffrage, as that women have not, in the phrase of old Theophilus Parsons, "a sufficient acquired discretion," or that they are too impulsive, or that they cannot fight, — all these seem to me trivial; but it is necessary always to face the fact that this is the only great reform in which a minority, at least, of the very persons to be benefited are working actively on the other side. This, to my mind, only confirms its necessity, as showing that, as Mill says, the very nature of woman has been to some extent warped and enfeebled by prolonged subjugation, and must have time to recover itself.

It was in the direction of the anti-slavery reform, however, that I felt the most immediate pricking of conscience, and it may be interesting, as a study of the period, to note what brought it about. There was, perhaps, some tendency that way in the blood, for I rejoice to recall the fact that after Judge Sewall, in 1700, had published his noted tract against slavery,

called "The Selling of Joseph," the first protest against slavery in Massachusetts, he himself testified, six years later, "Amidst the frowns and hard words I have met with for this Undertaking, it is no small refreshment to me that I can have the Learned Reverend and Aged Mr. Higginson for my Abetter." This was my ancestor, the Rev. John Higginson, of Salem, then ninety years old; but my own strongest impulse came incidentally from my mother. It happened that my father, in his office of steward of the college, was also "patron," as it was called, having charge of the affairs of the more distant students, usually from the Southern States. This led to pleasant friendships with their families, and to occasional visits paid by my parents, traveling in their own conveyance. Being once driven from place to place by an intelligent negro driver, my mother said to him that she thought him very well situated, after all; on which he turned and looked at her, simply saying, "Ah, missis! free breath is good." It impressed her greatly, and she put it into her diary, whence my eldest brother, Dr. Francis John Higginson, quoted it in a little book he wrote, "Remarks on Slavery," published in 1834. This fixed it in my mind, and I remember to have asked my aunt why my uncle in Virginia did not free his slaves. She

replied that they loved him, and would be sorry to be free. This did not satisfy me; but on my afterward visiting the Virginia plantation, there was nothing to suggest anything undesirable: the head servant was a grave and dignified man, with the most unexceptionable manners; and the white and black children often played together in the afternoon. It was then illegal to teach a slave to read, but one girl was pointed out who had picked up a knowledge of reading while the white children were learning. The slaves seemed merely to share in the kindly and rather slipshod methods of a Southern establishment; and my only glimpse of the other side was from overhearing conversation between the overseer and his friends, in which all the domestic relations of the negroes were spoken of precisely as if they had been animals.

Returning to Cambridge, I found the whole feeling of the college strongly opposed to the abolition movement, as had also been that among my Brookline friends and kindred. My uncle, Mr. Samuel Perkins, had lived in Hayti during the insurrection, and had written an account of it which he gave me to read, and which was afterwards printed by Charles Perkins in the "Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society." He thought, and most men of his class firmly believed, that any step to-

ward emancipation would lead to instant and formidable insurrection. It was in this sincere but deluded belief that such men mobbed Garrison. When I once spoke with admiration of that reformer to Mr. Augustus Aspinwall, a frequent guest at my uncle's house, he replied with perfect gentleness, sipping his wine, "It may be as you say. I never saw him, but I always supposed him to be a fellow who ought to be hung." Mr. Aspinwall was a beautiful old man, who cultivated the finest roses to be found near Boston; he had the most placid voice, the sweetest courtesy, and the most adamantine opinions, — the kind of man who might have been shot in the doorway of his own château during the French Revolution. If it had come in his way, he would undoubtedly have seen Garrison executed, and would then have gone back to finish clearing his roses of snails and rose-beetles. The early history of the anti-slavery agitation cannot possibly be understood unless we comprehend this class of men who then ruled Boston opinion.

I know of no book except the last two volumes of Pierce's "Life of Charles Sumner" which fully does justice to the way in which the anti-slavery movement drew a line of cleavage through all Boston society, leaving most of the more powerful or wealthy families on the

conservative side. What finally determined me in the other direction was the immediate influence of two books, both by women. One of these was Miss Martineau's tract, "The Martyr Age in America," portraying the work of the Abolitionists with such force and eloquence that it seemed as if no generous youth could be happy in any other company; and the other book was Mrs. Lydia Maria Child's "Appeal for that Class of Americans called Africans." This little work, for all its cumbrous title, was so wonderfully clear, compact, and convincing, it covered all its points so well and was so absolutely free from all unfairness or shrill invective, that it joined with Miss Martineau's less modulated strains to make me an Abolitionist. This was, it must be remembered, some years before the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." I longed to be counted worthy of such companionship; I wrote and printed a rather crude sonnet to Garrison; and my only sorrow was in feeling that, as Alexander lamented about his father Philip's conquests, nothing had been left for me to do. Fortunately, Lowell had already gone far in the same direction, under the influence of his wife; and her brother William, moreover, who had been for a time my schoolmate, had left all and devoted himself to anti-slavery lecturing. He it was who, when

on a tour with Frederick Douglass at the West, was entertained with him at a house where there was but one spare bed. To some apologies by the hostess the ever ready and imperial Douglass answered, with superb dignity, "Do not apologize, madam; I have not the slightest prejudice against color."

This was the condition of things then prevailing around Boston; and when I went to live in Newburyport the same point of view soon presented itself in another form. The parish, which at first welcomed me, counted among its strongest supporters a group of retired sea-captains who had traded with Charleston and New Orleans, and more than one of whom had found himself obliged, after sailing from a Southern port, to put back in order to eject some runaway slave from his lower hold. All their prejudices ran in one direction, and their view of the case differed from that of Boston society only as a rope's end differs from a rapier. One of them, perhaps the quietest, was the very Francis Todd who had caused the imprisonment of Garrison at Baltimore. It happened, besides, that the one political hero and favorite son of Newburyport, Caleb Cushing — for of Garrison himself they only felt ashamed — was at that moment fighting slavery's battles in the Mexican war. It now seems to me strange

that, under all these circumstances, I held my place for two years and a half. Of course it cannot be claimed that I showed unvarying tact; indeed, I can now see that it was quite otherwise; but it was a case where tact counted for little; in fact, I think my sea-captains did not wholly dislike my plainness of speech, though they felt bound to discipline it; and moreover the whole younger community was on my side. It did not help the matter that I let myself be nominated for Congress by the new "Free Soil" party in 1848, and "stumped the district," though in a hopeless minority. The nomination was Whittier's doing, partly to prevent that party from nominating him; and he agreed that, by way of reprieve, I should go to Lowell and induce Josiah G. Abbott, then a young lawyer, to stand in my place. Abbott's objection is worth recording: if elected, he said, he should immediately get into quarrels with the Southern members and have to fight duels, and this he could not conscientiously do. This was his ground of exemption. Years after, when he was an eminent judge in Boston and a very conservative Democrat, I once reminded him of this talk, and he said, "I should feel just the same now."

Having been, of course, defeated for Congress, as I had simply stood in a gap, I lived in

Newburyport for more than two years longer, after giving up my parish. This time was spent in writing for newspapers, teaching private classes in different studies, serving on the school committee and organizing public evening schools, then a great novelty. The place was, and is, a manufacturing town, and I had a large and intelligent class of factory girls, mostly American, who came to my house for reading and study once a week. In this work I enlisted a set of young maidens of unusual ability, several of whom were afterward well known to the world: Harriet Prescott, afterward Mrs. Spofford; Louisa Stone, afterward Mrs. Hopkins (well known for her educational writings); Jane Andrews (author of "The Seven Little Sisters," a book which has been translated into Chinese and Japanese); her sister Caroline, afterward Mrs. Rufus Leighton (author of "Life at Puget Sound,") and others not their inferiors, though their names were not to be found in print. I have never encountered elsewhere so noteworthy a group of young women, and all that period of work is a delightful reminiscence. My youthful coadjutors had been trained in a remarkably good school, the Putnam Free School, kept by William H. Wells, a celebrated teacher; and I had his hearty coöperation, and also that of Professor

Alpheus Crosby, one of the best scholars in New England, and then resident in Newburyport. With his aid I established a series of prizes for the best prose and poetry written by the young people of the town; and the first evidence given of the unusual talents of Harriet Prescott Spofford was in a very daring and original essay on Hamlet, written at sixteen, and gaining the first prize. I had also to do with the courses of lectures and concerts, and superintended the annual Floral Processions which were then a pretty feature of the Fourth of July in Essex County. On the whole, perhaps, I was as acceptable a citizen of the town as could be reasonably expected of one who had preached himself out of his pulpit.

I supposed myself to have given up preaching forever, and recalled the experience of my ancestor, the Puritan divine, Francis Higginson, who, when he had left his church-living at Leicester, England, in 1620, continued to lecture to all comers. But a new sphere of reformatory action opened for me in an invitation to take charge of the Worcester Free Church, the first of several such organizations that sprang up about that time under the influence of Theodore Parker's Boston society, which was their prototype. These organizations were all more or less of the "Jerusalem wildcat" de-

scription — this being the phrase by which a Lynn shoemaker described one of them — with no church membership or communion service, not calling themselves specifically Christian, but resembling the ethical societies of the present day, with a shade more of specifically religious aspect. Worcester was at that time a seething centre of all the reforms, and I found myself almost in fashion, at least with the unfashionable; my evening congregations were the largest in the city, and the men and women who surrounded me — now almost all passed away — were leaders in public movements in that growing community. Before my transfer, however, I went up to Boston on my first fugitive slave foray, as it might be called, — not the Anthony Burns affair, but the Thomas Sims case, which preceded it, and which was to teach me, once for all, that there was plenty left to be done, and that Philip had not fought all the battles.

# V

## THE FUGITIVE SLAVE EPOCH

"I canna think the preacher himself wad be heading the mob, tho' the time has been they have been as forward in a bruilzie as their neighbors." — SCOTT'S *The Heart of Mid-Lothian.*

NOTHING did more to strengthen my anti-slavery zeal, about 1848, than the frequent intercourse with Whittier and his household, made possible by their nearness to Newburyport. It was but a short walk or drive of a few miles from my residence to his home; or, better still, it implied a sail or row up the beautiful river, passing beneath the suspension bridge at Deer Island, to where the woods called "The Laurels" spread themselves on one side, and the twin villages of Salisbury and Amesbury on the other. There was something delightful in the position of the poet among the village people: he was their pride and their joy, yet he lived as simply as any one, was careful and abstemious, reticent rather than exuberant in manner, and met them wholly on matter-of-fact ground. He could sit on a barrel and discuss the affairs of the day with the people who came to

the "store," but he did not read them his verses. I was once expressing regrets for his ill health, in talking with one of the leading citizens of Amesbury, and found that my companion could not agree with me; he thought that Whittier's ill health had helped him in the end, for it had "kept him from engaging in business," and had led him to writing poetry, which had given him reputation outside of the town. That poetry was anything but a second choice, perhaps a necessary evil, did not seem to have occurred to my informant. Had he himself lost his health and been unable to sell groceries, who knows but he too might have taken up with the Muses? It suggested the Edinburgh citizen who thought that Sir Walter Scott might have been "sic a respectable mon" had he stuck to his original trade of law advocate.

To me, who sought Whittier for his poetry as well as his politics, nothing could have been more delightful than his plain abode with its exquisite Quaker neatness. His placid mother, rejoicing in her two gifted children, presided with few words at the hospitable board whose tablecloth and napkins rivaled her soul in whiteness; and with her was the brilliant "Lizzie," so absolutely the reverse, or complement, of her brother that they seemed between them to make one soul. She was as plain in feature as

he was handsome, except that she had a pair of great luminous dark eyes, always flashing with fun or soft with emotion, and often changing with lightning rapidity from one expression to another; her nose was large and aquiline, while his was almost Grecian, and she had odd motions of the head, so that her glances seemed shot at you, like sudden javelins, from each side of a prominent outwork. Her complexion was sallow, not rich brunette like his; and whereas he spoke seldom and with some difficulty, her gay raillery was unceasing, and was enjoyed by him as much as by anybody, so that he really appeared to have transferred to her the expression of his own opinions. The lively utterances thus came with double force upon the auditor, and he could not fail to go out strengthened and stimulated. Sometimes the Whittiers had guests; and "Lizzie" delighted to tell how their mother was once met at the door by two plump maidens who announced that they had come from Ohio mainly to see her son. She explained that he was in Boston. No matter; they would come in and await his return. But he might be away a week. No matter; they would willingly wait that time for such a pleasure. So in they came. They proved to be Alice and Phœbe Cary, whose earlier poems, which had already preceded them, were filled with dirges and de-

spair; but they were the merriest of housemates, and as the poet luckily returned next day, they stayed as long as they pleased, and were welcome.

The invigorating influence of the Whittier household supplied the tonic needed in those trying days. The Fugitive Slave Law had just passed, and a year or two after Garrison had proudly showed a row of escaped negroes sitting on the platform of an anti-slavery convention, and had defied the whole South to reclaim them, these very men were fleeing to Canada for their lives. When the storm first broke, on February 15, 1851, in the arrest of Shadrach, Boston had a considerable colored population, which handled his rescue with such unexpected skill and daring that it almost seemed as if Garrison were right; yet it took but a few days for their whole force to be scattered to the winds. The exact story of the Shadrach rescue has never been written. The account which appears most probable is that on the day of the arraignment of the alleged fugitive, the fact was noted in a newspaper by a colored man of great energy and character, employed by a firm in Boston and utterly unconnected with the Abolitionists. He asked leave of absence, and strolled into the Court-House. Many colored men were at the door and

had been excluded; but he, being known and trusted, was admitted, and the others, making a rush, followed in behind him with a hubbub of joking and laughter. There were but a few constables on duty, and it suddenly struck this leader, as he and his followers passed near the man under arrest, that they might as well keep on and pass out at the opposite door, taking among them the man under arrest, who was not handcuffed. After a moment's beckoning the prisoner saw his opportunity, fell in with the jubilant procession, and amid continued uproar was got outside the Court-House, when the crowd scattered in all directions.

It was an exploit which, as has been well said, would hardly have furnished a press item had it been the case of a pickpocket, yet was treated at Washington as if it had shaken the nation. Daniel Webster called it "a case of treason;" President Fillmore issued a special proclamation; and Henry Clay gave notice of a bill to lend added strength to the Fugitive Slave Law, so as to settle the question "whether the government of white men is to be yielded to a government of blacks." More curious even than this was the development of anti-slavery ethics that followed. The late Richard H. Dana, the counsel for various persons arrested as accomplices in the rescue of Sha-

drach, used to tell with delight this tale of a juryman impaneled on that trial. To Dana's great surprise, the jury had disagreed concerning one client who had been charged with aiding in the affair and whose conviction he had fully expected; and this surprise was all the greater because new and especial oaths had been administered to the jurymen, pledging them to have no conscientious scruples against convicting, so that it seemed as if every one with a particle of anti-slavery sympathy must have been ruled out. Years after, Dana encountered by accident the very juryman — a Concord blacksmith — whose obstinacy had saved his client; and learned that this man's unalterable reason for refusing to condemn was that he himself had taken a hand in the affair, inasmuch as he had driven Shadrach, after his rescue, from Concord to Sudbury.[1]

I fear I must admit that while it would have been a great pleasure to me to have lent a hand in the Shadrach affair, the feeling did not come wholly from moral conviction, but from an

[1] See Adams's *Life of Dana*, i. 217. The story there is related from Mr. Adams's recollection, which differs in several respects from my own, as to the way in which Dana used to tell it. Possibly, as with other good *raconteurs*, the details may have varied a little as time went on. I write with two MS. narratives before me, both from well-known Concord men.

impulse perhaps hereditary in the blood. Probably I got from my two soldier and sailor grandfathers an intrinsic love of adventure which haunted me in childhood, and which threescore and fourteen years have by no means worn out. So far as I can now analyze it, this early emotion was not created by the wish for praise alone, but was mainly a boyish desire for a stirring experience. No man so much excited my envy during my whole college life as did a reckless Southern law student, named Winfield Scott Belton, who, when the old Vassall House in Cambridge was all in flames, and the firemen could not reach the upper story with their ladders, suddenly appeared from within at an attic window, amid the smoke, and pointed out to them the way to follow. Like most boys, I had a passion for fires ; but after this the trophies of Belton would not suffer me to sleep, and I often ran miles towards a light in the horizon. But the great opportunity never occurs twice, and the nearest I ever came to it was in being one of several undergraduates to bring the elder Professor Henry Ware out of his burning house. It was not much of a feat, — we afterwards risked ourselves a great deal more to bring some trays of pickle-jars from the cellar, — but in the case of the venerable doctor the object was certainly worth all it cost

us ; for he was the progenitor of that admirable race upon which, as Dr. Holmes said to Professor Stowe, the fall of Adam had not left the slightest visible impression.

This combination of motives was quite enough to make me wish that if there should be another fugitive slave case I might at least be there to see, and, joining the Vigilance Committee in Boston, I waited for such an occasion. It was not necessary to wait long, for the Shadrach case was soon to be followed by another. One day in April, 1851, a messenger came to my house in Newburyport and said briefly, "Another fugitive slave is arrested in Boston, and they wish you to come." I went back with him that afternoon, and found the Vigilance Committee in session in the "Liberator" office. It is impossible to conceive of a set of men, personally admirable, yet less fitted on the whole than this committee to undertake any positive action in the direction of forcible resistance to authorities. In the first place, half of them were non-resistants, as was their great leader, Garrison, who stood composedly by his desk preparing his next week's editorial, and almost exasperating the more hot-headed among us by the placid way in which he looked beyond the rescue of an individual to the purifying of a nation. On the other hand,

the "political Abolitionists," or Free-Soilers, while personally full of indignation, were extremely anxious not to be placed for one moment outside the pale of good citizenship. The only persons to be relied upon for action were a few whose temperament prevailed over the restrictions of non-resistance on the one side, and of politics on the other; but of course their discussion was constantly damped by the attitude of the rest. All this would not, however, apply to the negroes, it might well seem; they had just proved their mettle, and would doubtless do it again. On my saying this in the meeting, Lewis Hayden, the leading negro in Boston, nodded cordially and said, "Of course they will." Soon after, drawing me aside, he startled me by adding, "I said that for bluff, you know. We do not wish any one to know how really weak we are. Practically there are no colored men in Boston; the Shadrach prosecutions have scattered them all. What is to be done must be done without them." Here was a blow indeed!

What was to be done? The next day showed that absolutely nothing could be accomplished in the court-room. There were one or two hundred armed policemen in and around the Court-House. Only authorized persons could get within ten feet of the building. Chains

were placed across the doors, and beneath these even the judges, entering, had to stoop. The United States court-room was up two high and narrow flights of stairs. Six men were at the door of the court-room. The prisoner, a slender boy of seventeen, sat with two strong men on each side and five more in the seat behind him, while none but his counsel could approach him in front. (All this I take from notes made at the time.) The curious thing was that although there was a state law of 1843 prohibiting every Massachusetts official from taking any part in the restoration of a fugitive slave, yet nearly all these employees were Boston policemen, acting, so the city marshal told me, under orders from the mayor and aldermen. Under these circumstances there was clearly nothing to be done at the trial itself. And yet all sorts of fantastic and desperate projects crossed the minds of those few among us who really, so to speak, meant business. I remember consulting Ellis Gray Loring, the most eminent lawyer among the Abolitionists, as to the possibility of at least gaining time by making away with the official record from the Southern court, a document which lay invitingly at one time among lawyers' papers on the table. Again, I wrote a letter to my schoolmate Charles Devens, the United States marshal, imploring him to

resign rather than be the instrument of sending a man into bondage, — a thing actually done by one of the leading Boston policemen. It is needless to say to those who knew him that he answered courteously and that he reserved his decision. No other chance opening, it seemed necessary to turn all attention to an actual rescue of the prisoner from his place of confinement. Like Shadrach, Thomas Sims was not merely tried in the United States Court-House, but imprisoned there, because the state jail was not opened to him ; he not having been arrested under any state law, and the United States having no jail in Boston. In the previous case, an effort had been made to obtain permission to confine the fugitive slave at the Navy Yard, but Commodore Downes had refused. Sims, therefore, like Shadrach, was kept at the Court-House. Was it possible to get him out ?

There was on Tuesday evening a crowded meeting at Tremont Temple, at which Horace Mann presided. I hoped strongly that some result might come from this meeting, and made a vehement speech there myself, which, as Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe honored me by saying, ' was bringing the community to the verge of revolution, when a lawyer named Charles Mayo Ellis protested against its tone, and threw cold

water upon all action. It was evident that if anything was done, it must be done by a very few. I looked round, during the meeting, for a band of twenty-five men from Marlborough, who had seemed to me to show more fighting quality than the rest, but they had probably gone home. Under this conviction half a dozen of us formed the following plan. The room where Sims was confined, being safe by reason of its height from the ground, had no gratings at the windows. The colored clergyman of Boston, Mr. Grimes, who alone had the opportunity to visit Sims, agreed to arrange with him that at a specified hour that evening he should go to a certain window, as if for air, — for he had the freedom of the room, — and should spring out on mattresses which we were to bring from a lawyer's office across the way; we also providing a carriage in which to place him. All was arranged, — the message sent, the mattresses ready, the carriage engaged as if for an ordinary purpose ; and behold ! in the dusk of that evening, two of us, strolling through Court Square, saw men busily at work fitting iron bars across this safe third-story window. Whether we had been betrayed, or whether it was simply a bit of extraordinary precaution, we never knew. Colonel Montgomery, an experienced guerrilla in Kansas, used to say, "It

is always best to take for granted that your opponent is at least as smart as you yourself are." This, evidently, we had not done.

I knew that there was now no chance of the rescue of Sims. The only other plan that had been suggested was that we should charter a vessel, place it in charge of Austin Bearse, a Cape Cod sea-captain and one of our best men, and take possession of the brig Acorn, on which Sims was expected to be placed. This project was discussed at a small meeting in Theodore Parker's study, and was laid aside as impracticable, not because it was piracy, but because there was no absolute certainty that the fugitive would be sent South in that precise way. As no other plan suggested itself, and as I had no wish to look on, with my hands tied, at the surrender, I went back to my home in deep chagrin. The following extract from a journal written soon after is worth preserving as an illustration of that curious period: —

"It left me with the strongest impressions of the great want of preparation, on our part, for this revolutionary work. Brought up as we have all been, it takes the whole experience of one such case to educate the mind to the attitude of revolution. It is so strange to find one's self outside of established institutions; to be obliged to lower one's voice and conceal

one's purposes; to see law and order, police and military, on the wrong side, and find good citizenship a sin and bad citizenship a duty, that it takes time to prepare one to act coolly and wisely, as well as courageously, in such an emergency. Especially this is true among reformers, who are not accustomed to act according to fixed rules and observances, but to strive to do what seems to themselves best, without reference to others. The Vigilance Committee meetings were a disorderly convention, each man having his own plan or theory, perhaps stopping even for anecdote or disquisition, when the occasion required the utmost promptness of decision and the most unflinching unity in action. . . . Our most reliable men were non-resistants, and some who were otherwise were the intensest visionaries. Wendell Phillips was calm and strong throughout; I never saw a finer gleam in his eyes than when drawing up that stirring handbill at the anti-slavery office."

During the months which followed, I attended anti-slavery conventions; wrote editorially for the newly established "Commonwealth," the Boston organ of the Free Soil party; and had also a daily "Independent Column" of my own in the "Newburyport Union," a liberal Democratic paper. No other fugitive slave

case occurred in New England for three years. The mere cost in money of Sims's surrender had been vast; the political results had been the opposite of what was intended, for the election of Charles Sumner to the United States Senate practically followed from it. The whole anti-slavery feeling at the North was obviously growing stronger, yet there seemed a period of inaction all round, or of reliance on ordinary political methods in the contest. In 1852 I removed to Worcester, into a strong anti-slavery community of which my "Free Church" was an important factor. Fugitives came sometimes to the city, and I have driven them at midnight to the farm of the veteran Abolitionists, Stephen and Abby Kelley Foster, in the suburbs of the city. Perhaps the most curious case with which we had to deal was that of a pretty young woman, apparently white, with two perfectly white children, all being consigned to me by the Rev. Samuel May, then secretary of the Boston Anti-Slavery Society, and placed by him, for promptness of transportation to Worcester, under the escort of a Worcester merchant, thoroughly pro-slavery in sympathy, and not having the slightest conception that he was violating the laws in finding a seat for his charge and holding the baby on his knee. We had them in our care all winter.

It was one of those cases of romantic incident which slavery yielded. She was the daughter of her former master, and was the mistress of her present owner, her half-brother; she could scarcely read and write, but was perfectly lady-like, modest, and grateful. She finally married a tradesman near Boston, who knew her story, and she disappeared in the mass of white population, where we were content to leave her untraced.

All this minor anti-slavery work ended when, on Thursday evening, May 25, 1854, I had a letter by private messenger from the same Samuel May just mentioned, saying that a slave had been arrested, and the case was to be heard on Saturday morning; that a meeting was to be held on Friday evening at Faneuil Hall, and it was important that Worcester should be well represented. Mr. A. B. Alcott also came thither on the same errand. I sent messages to several persons, and especially to a man of remarkable energy, named Martin Stowell, who had taken part in a slave rescue at Syracuse, New York, urging them to follow at once. Going to Boston on the morning train, I found myself presently in a meeting of the Vigilance Committee, not essentially different from those which had proved so disappointing three years before. There was not

only no plan of action, but no set purpose of united action. This can be imagined when I say that at one moment when there seemed a slight prospect of practical agreement, some one came in to announce that Suttle and his men, the slave-catchers, were soon to pass by, and proposed that we should go out and gaze at them, "pointing the finger of scorn," — as if Southern slave-catchers were to be combated by such weapons. This, however, had an effect in so far that the general committee adjourned, letting those alone remain who were willing to act personally in forcible resistance. This reduced our sixty down to thirty, of whom I was chosen chairman. Dr. Howe was then called on to speak, and gave some general advice, very good and spirited. Two things were resolved on, — to secure the names of those willing to act, and to have definite leadership. One leader would have been best, but we had not quite reached that point, so an executive committee of six was chosen at last, — Phillips, Parker, Howe, Kemp (an energetic Irishman), Captain Bearse, and myself ; Stowell was added to these at my request. Even then it was inconceivably difficult to get the names of as many as twenty who would organize and obey orders. The meeting adjourned till afternoon, when matters were yet worse, — mere talk and

discussion; but it seemed to me, at least, that something must be done; better a failure than to acquiesce tamely as before, and see Massachusetts henceforward made a hunting-ground for fugitive slaves.

All hopes now rested on Stowell, who was to arrive from Worcester at six P. M. I met him at the train, and walked up with him. He heard the condition of affairs, and at once suggested a new plan as the only thing feasible. The man must be taken from the Court-House. It could not be done in cold blood, but the effort must have behind it the momentum of a public meeting, such as was to be held at Faneuil Hall that night. An attack at the end of the meeting would be hopeless, for the United States marshal would undoubtedly be looking for just that attempt, and would be reinforced accordingly; this being, as we afterwards found, precisely what that official was planning. Could there not be an attack at the very height of the meeting, brought about in this way? Let all be in readiness; let a picked body be distributed near the Court House and Square; then send some loud-voiced speaker, who should appear in the gallery of Faneuil Hall and announce that there was a mob of negroes already attacking the Court-House; let a speaker, previously warned, — Phillips,

if possible, — accept the opportunity promptly, and send the whole meeting pell-mell to Court Square, ready to fall in behind the leaders and bring out the slave. The project struck me as an inspiration. I accepted it heartily, and think now, as I thought then, that it was one of the very best plots that ever — failed. "Good plot, good friends, and full of expectation." Why it came within an inch of success and still failed will next be explained.

The first thing to be done — after providing a box of axes for attack on the Court-House doors, a thing which I personally superintended — was to lay the whole matter before the committee already appointed and get its concurrence. This committee was to meet in the ante-room of Faneuil Hall before the general meeting. As a matter of fact it never came together, for everybody was pushing straight into the hall. The moments passed rapidly. We caught first one member of the committee, then another, and expounded the plot. Some approved, others disapproved; our stout sea-captain, Bearse, distrusting anything to be attempted on land, utterly declining all part in it. Howe and Parker gave a hasty approval, and — only half comprehending, as it afterwards proved — were warned to be ready to give indorsement from the platform; Phillips it was impossible

to find, but we sent urgent messages, which never reached him; Kemp stood by us: and we had thus a clear majority of the committee, which although it had been collectively opposed to the earlier plan of an attack at the end of the meeting, was yet now committed to a movement half way through, by way of surprise. We at once found our gallery orator in the late John L. Swift, a young man full of zeal, with a stentorian voice, afterwards exercised stoutly for many years in Republican and temperance meetings. He having pledged himself to make the proposed announcement, it was only necessary to provide a nucleus of picked men to head the attack. Stowell, Kemp, and I were each to furnish five of these, and Lewis Hayden, the colored leader, agreed to supply ten negroes. So far all seemed ready, and the men were found as well as the general confusion permitted; but the very success and overwhelming numbers of the Faneuil Hall meeting soon became a formidable obstacle instead of a help.

It was the largest gathering I ever saw in that hall. The platform was covered with men; the galleries, the floor, even the outer stairways, were absolutely filled with a solid audience. Some came to sympathize, more to look on, — we could not estimate the propor-

tion; but when the speaking was once begun, we could no more communicate with the platform than if the Atlantic Ocean rolled between. There was then no private entrance to it, such as now exists, and in this seemingly slight architectural difference lay the failure of the whole enterprise, as will be presently seen.

Those of us who had been told off to be ready in Court Square went there singly, not to attract attention. No sign of motion or life was there, though the lights gleamed from many windows, for it happened — a bit of unlooked-for good fortune — that the Supreme Court was holding an evening session, and ordinary visitors could pass freely. Planting myself near a door which stood ajar, on the east side of the building, I waited for the trap to be sprung, and for the mob of people to appear from Faneuil Hall. The moments seemed endless. Would our friends never arrive? Presently a rush of running figures, like the sweep of a wave, came round the corner of Court Square, and I watched it with such breathless anxiety as I have experienced only twice or thrice in life. The crowd ran on pell-mell, and I scanned it for a familiar face. A single glance brought the conviction of failure and disappointment. We had the froth and scum of the meeting, the fringe of idlers

on its edge. The men on the platform, the real nucleus of that great gathering, were far in the rear, perhaps were still clogged in the hall. Still, I stood, with assumed carelessness, by the entrance, when an official ran up from the basement, looked me in the face, ran in, and locked the door. There was no object in preventing him, since there was as yet no visible reinforcement of friends. Mingling with the crowd, I ran against Stowell, who had been looking for the axes, stored at a friend's office in Court Square. He whispered, "Some of our men are bringing a beam up to the west door, the one that gives entrance to the upper stairway." Instantly he and I ran round and grasped the beam; I finding myself at the head, with a stout negro opposite me. The real attack had begun.

What followed was too hurried and confusing to be described with perfect accuracy of detail, although the main facts stand out vividly enough. Taking the joist up the steps, we hammered away at the southwest door of the Court-House. It could not have been many minutes before it began to give way, was then secured again, then swung ajar, and rested heavily, one hinge having parted. There was room for but one to pass in. I glanced instinctively at my black ally. He did not even

look at me, but sprang in first, I following. In later years the experience was of inestimable value to me, for it removed once for all every doubt of the intrinsic courage of the blacks. We found ourselves inside, face to face with six or eight policemen, who laid about them with their clubs, driving us to the wall and hammering away at our heads. Often as I had heard of clubbing, I had never before known just how it felt, and to my surprise it was not half so bad as I expected. I was unarmed, but had taken boxing lessons at several different times, and perhaps felt, like Dr. Holmes's young man named John, that I had "a new way of counterin' I wanted to try;" but hands were powerless against clubs, although my burly comrade wielded his lustily. All we could expect was to be a sort of clumsy Arnold Winkelrieds and "make way for liberty." All other thought was merged in this, the expectation of reinforcements. I did not know that I had received a severe cut on the chin, whose scar I yet carry, though still ignorant how it came. Nor did I know till next morning, what had a more important bearing on the seeming backwardness of my supposed comrades, that, just as the door sprang open, a shot had been fired, and one of the marshal's deputies, a man named Batchelder, had fallen dead.

There had been other fugitive slave rescues in different parts of the country, but this was the first drop of blood actually shed. In all the long procession of events which led the nation through the Kansas struggle, past the John Brown foray, and up to the Emancipation Proclamation, the killing of Batchelder was the first act of violence. It was, like the firing on Fort Sumter, a proof that war had really begun. The mob outside was daunted by the event, the marshal's posse inside was frightened, and what should have been the signal of success brought, on the contrary, a cessation of hostilities. The theory at the time was that the man had been stabbed by a knife, thrust through the broken panel. The coroner's inquest found it to be so, and the press, almost as active as now, yet no more accurate, soon got so far as to describe the weapon, — a Malay kris, said to have been actually picked up in the street. For years I supposed all this to be true, and conjectured that either my negro comrade did the deed, or else Lewis Hayden, who was just behind him.[1] Naturally, we never exchanged a

[1] Lewis Hayden apparently fired a shot in my defense, after entrance had been made, but this was doubtless after the death of Batchelder; and the bullet or slug was said to have passed between the arm and body of Marshal Freeman. When Theodore Parker heard this statement, he wrung his hands and said, "Why did he not hit him?"

word on the subject, as it was a serious matter; and it was not till within a few years (1888) that it was claimed by a well-known journalist, the late Thomas Drew, that it was Martin Stowell who shot, not stabbed, Batchelder; that Drew had originally given Stowell the pistol; and that when the latter was arrested and imprisoned, on the night of the outbreak, he sent for Drew and managed to hand him the weapon, which Drew gave to some one else, who concealed it till long after the death of Stowell in the Civil War. This vital part of the facts, at the one point which made of the outbreak a capital offense, remained thus absolutely unknown, even to most of the participants, for thirty-four years. As Drew had seen the revolver loaded in Worcester, and had found, after its restoration, that one barrel had been discharged, and as he was also in the attacking party and heard the firing, there can be no reasonable doubt that the revolver was fired. On the other hand, I am assured by George H. Munroe, Esq., of the "Boston Herald," who was a member of the coroner's jury, that the surgical examination was a very thorough one, and that the wound was undoubtedly made by a knife or bayonet, it being some two inches long, largest in the middle and tapering towards each end. A similar statement was made at the

time, to one of my informants, by Dr. Charles T. Jackson, the reported discoverer of etherization, who was one of the surgical examiners. It is therefore pretty certain that Stowell's bullet did not hit the mark after all, and that the man who killed Batchelder is still unknown.

All this, however, was without my knowledge; I only knew that we were gradually forced back beyond the threshold, the door standing now wide open, and our supporters having fallen back to leave the steps free. Mr. Charles E. Stevens, in his "Anthony Burns, a History," published in 1856, says that I said on emerging, "You cowards, will you desert us now?" And though his narrative, like most contemporary narratives, is full of inaccuracies, this statement may be true; it was certainly what I felt, not knowing that a man had already been killed, and that Stowell and others had just been taken off by the police. I held my place outside, still hoping against hope that some concerted reinforcement might appear. Meanwhile the deputy marshals retreated to the stairway, over which we could see their pistols pointing, the whole hall between us and them being brightly lighted. The moments passed on. One energetic young lawyer, named Seth Webb, whom I had known in college, ran up the steps, but I dissuaded him from entering

alone, and he waited. Then followed one of the most picturesque incidents of the whole affair. In the silent pause that ensued there came quietly forth from the crowd the well-known form of Mr. Amos Bronson Alcott, the Transcendental philosopher. Ascending the lighted steps alone, he said tranquilly, turning to me and pointing forward, "Why are we not within?" "Because," was the rather impatient answer, "these people will not stand by us." He said not a word, but calmly walked up the steps, — he and his familiar cane. He paused again at the top, the centre of all eyes, within and without; a revolver sounded from within, but hit nobody; and finding himself wholly unsupported, he turned and retreated, but without hastening a step. It seemed to me that, under the circumstances, neither Plato nor Pythagoras could have done the thing better; and the whole scene brought vividly back the similar appearance of the Gray Champion in Hawthorne's tale.

This ended the whole affair. Two companies of artillery had been ordered out, and two more of marines, these coming respectively from Fort Warren and the Charlestown Navy Yard. (Here again I follow Stevens.) Years after, the successor of the United States marshal, the Hon. Roland G. Usher, said to me

that his predecessor had told him that the surprise was complete, and that thirty resolute men could have carried off Burns. Had the private entrance to the platform in Faneuil Hall existed then, as now, those thirty would certainly have been at hand. The alarm planned to be given from the gallery was heard in the meeting, but was disbelieved; it was thought to be a scheme to interrupt the proceedings. Phillips had not received notice of it. Parker and Howe had not fully comprehended the project; but when the latter could finally get out of the hall he ran at full speed up to the Court-House, with Dr. William Francis Channing at his side, and they — two of our most determined men — found the field lost. Had they and such as they been present, it might have been very different.

The attempt being a failure and troops approaching, I went down the steps. There is always a farce ready to succeed every tragedy, and mine occurred when a man in the crowd sidled quietly up to me and placidly remarked, "Mister, I guess you've left your rumberill." It flashed through my mind that before taking hold of the beam I had set down my umbrella — for it was a showery day — over the railing of the Court-House steps. Recapturing this important bit of evidence, I made my way

to Dr. W. F. Channing's house, had my cut attended to, and went to bed; awaking in a somewhat battered condition the next morning, and being sent off to Worcester by my advisers. Then followed my arrest after a few days, — a matter conducted so courteously that the way of the transgressor became easy.

Naturally enough, my neighbors and friends regarded my arrest and possible conviction as a glory or a disgrace according to their opinions on the slavery question. Fortunately it did not disturb my courageous mother, who wrote, "I assure you it does not trouble me, though I dare say that some of my friends are commiserating me for having a son 'riotously and routously engaged,'" — these being the curious legal terms of the indictment. For myself, it was easy to take the view of my old favorite Lamennais, who regarded any life as rather incomplete which did not, as in his own case, include some experience of imprisonment in a good cause. ("Il manque toujours quelque chose à la belle vie, qui ne finit pas sur le champ de bataille, sur l'échafaud ou en prison.") In my immediate household the matter was taken coolly enough to suggest a calm inquiry, one day, by the lady of the house, whether all my letters to her from the prison would probably be read by the jailer; to which a young

niece, then staying with us, replied with the levity of her years, "Not if he writes them in his usual handwriting."

It was left to my honor to report myself at the station in due time to meet the officers of the law; and my family, responding to this courtesy, were even more anxious than usual that I should not miss the train. In Boston, my friend Richard Henry Dana went with me to the marshal's office; and I was seated in a chair to be "looked over" for identification by the various officers who were to testify at the trial. They sat or stood around me in various attitudes, with a curious and solemn depth of gaze which seemed somewhat conventional and even melodramatic. It gave the exciting sensation of being a bold Turpin just from Hounslow Heath; but it was on a Saturday, and there was something exquisitely amusing in the extreme anxiety of Marshal Tukey — a dark, handsome, picturesque man, said to pride himself on a certain Napoleonic look — that I should reach home in time for my Sunday's preaching. Later the long trial unrolled itself, in which, happily, my presence was not necessary after pleading to the indictment. Theodore Parker was the only one among the defendants who attended steadily every day, and he prepared that elaborate defense which was

printed afterwards. The indictment was ultimately quashed as imperfect, and we all got out of the affair, as it were, by the side-door.

I have passed over the details of the trial as I omitted those relating to the legal defense of Burns, the efforts to purchase him, and his final delivery to his claimant, because I am describing the affair only as a private soldier tells of what he personally saw and knew. I must, however, mention, in closing, a rather amusing afterpiece to the whole matter, — something which occurred on October 30, 1854. A Boston policeman, named Butman, who had been active at the time of Burns's capture, came up to Worcester for the purpose, real or reputed, of looking for evidence against those concerned in the riot. The city being intensely anti-slavery and having a considerable colored population, there was a strong disposition to lynch the man, or at least to frighten him thoroughly, though the movement was checked by a manly speech to the crowd by George Frisbie Hoar, now United States Senator, but then a young lawyer; the ultimate result being that Butman was escorted to the railway station on Mr. Hoar's arm, with a cordon of Abolitionists about him, as a shelter from the negroes who constantly rushed at him from the rear. I was one of this escort, and directly behind Butman

walked Joseph Howland, a non-resistant of striking appearance, who satisfied his sensitive conscience by this guarded appeal, made at intervals in a sonorous voice: "Don't hurt him, mean as he is! Don't kill him, mean though he be!" At Howland's side was Thomas Drew, a vivacious little journalist, already mentioned, who compounded with his conscience very differently. Nudging back reprovingly the negroes and others who pressed upon the group, he would occasionally, when the coast was clear, run up and administer a vigorous kick to the unhappy victim, and then fall back to repress the assailants once more. As for these last, they did not seem to be altogether in earnest, but half in joke; although the scene gave the foundation for a really powerful chapter, called "The Roar of St. Domingo," in the now forgotten novel "Harrington," by W. D. O'Connor.

Nevertheless, Butman was once knocked down by a stone; and when we reached the station just as the express train moved away, thus leaving him behind, there began to come up an ugly shout from the mob, which seemed to feel for a moment that the Lord had delivered the offender into its hands. As a horse with a wagon attached was standing near by, it was hastily decided to put Butman into the wagon and drive him off, — a proposal which he

eagerly accepted. I got in with him and took the reins; but the mob around us grasped the wheels till the spokes began to break. Then the owner arrived, and seized the horse by the head to stop us. By the prompt action of the late William W. Rice, — since member of Congress, — a hack was at once substituted for the wagon; it drove up close, so that Butman and I sprang into it and were whirled away before the mob fairly knew what had happened. A few stones were hurled through the windows, and I never saw a more abject face than that of the slave-catcher as he crouched between the seats and gasped out, "They'll get fast teams and be after us." This, however, did not occur, and we drove safely beyond the mob and out of the city towards Grafton, where Butman was to take a later train. Having him thus at my mercy, and being doubtless filled with prophetic zeal, I took an inhuman advantage of Butman, and gave him a discourse on the baseness of his whole career which would perhaps have made my reputation as a pulpit orator had my congregation consisted of more than one, or had any modern reporter been hidden under the cushions. Being overtaken a mile or two out of town by Lovell Baker, the city marshal, with a "fast team" such as Butman had dreaded, the man was

transferred to him, and was driven by him, not merely to Grafton, but at Butman's urgent request to Boston and through the most unfrequented streets to his home. I meanwhile returned peacefully to Worcester, pausing only at the now deserted station to hunt up my wife's india-rubber overshoes, which I was carrying to be mended when the *émeute* broke out, and which I had sacrificed as heroically as I had nearly relinquished my umbrella at the Boston Court-House.

The Burns affair was the last actual fugitive slave case that occurred in Massachusetts, although for some years we kept up organizations and formed plans, and were better and better prepared for action as the call for it disappeared. I was for some years a stockholder in the yacht Flirt, which was kept in commission under the faithful Captain Bearse, and was nominally let for hire, though really intended either to take slaves from incoming vessels, or, in case of need, to kidnap the claimant of a slave and keep him cruising on the coast of Maine until his claim should be surrendered. It all now looks very far off, and there has been time for the whole affair to be regarded in several different aspects. After the Civil War had accustomed men to the habitual use of arms and to military organization, the

"Burns riot" naturally appeared in retrospect a boyish and inadequate affair enough; we could all see how, given only a community of veteran soldiers, the thing might have been more neatly managed. And again, now that thirty years of peace have almost extinguished the habits and associations of war, still another phase of feeling has come uppermost, and it seems almost incredible that any condition of things should have turned honest American men into conscientious law-breakers. Yet such transitions have occurred in all periods of history, and the author of the "Greville Journals" records the amazement with which he heard that "Tom Grenville, so mild, so refined, adorned with such an amiable, venerable, and decorous old age," should be the same man who had helped, sixty years before, to carry the Admiralty building by storm in the riots occasioned by the trial of Admiral Keppel, and had been the second man to enter at the breach. Probably, if the whole truth were told, the sincere law-breakers of the world are the children of temperament as well as of moral conviction, and at any period of life, if the whirligig of time brought back the old conditions, would act very much as they acted before.

## VI

### THE BIRTH OF A LITERATURE

"We are looking abroad and back after a literature. Let us come and live, and know in living a high philosophy and faith; so shall we find now, here, the elements, and in our own good souls the fire. Of every storied bay and cliff we will make something infinitely nobler than Salamis or Marathon. This pale Massachusetts sky, this sandy soil and raw wind, all shall nurture us. . . . Unlike all the world before us, our own age and land shall be classic to ourselves."

THE passage above quoted is from the Master of Arts oration of a young scholar — Robert Bartlett, of Plymouth — at the Harvard Commencement exercises of 1839. The original title of the oration was, "No Good Possible but shall One Day be Real." Bartlett, who had been the first scholar in his class, and was a tutor in the university, died a few years later, but the prophecy above given attracted much attention, and was printed in an English magazine, — "Heraud's Monthly" (April, 1840); — and when in that same year "The Dial" began to be published, the very first page of the first number gave as its basis "the strong current of thought and feeling which for a few years

past has led many sincere persons in New England to make new demands on literature." It was a foregone conclusion, however, that these new demands could not be fully met by the prophets who first announced them. Prophets only clear the way, and must wait for the slower march of trained though perhaps unprophetic co-laborers. A new era of American literature was at hand, but the Transcendental movement of itself could not directly have created it. Neither its organ, "The Dial," nor the avowed successor of that magazine, the "Massachusetts Quarterly Review," — announced by Theodore Parker as being "the Dial with a beard," — ever achieved a wide circulation. Fortunately, in the natural progress of things a new combination effected itself, and those who, like Holmes, had ridiculed the earlier movement found themselves ready within twenty years to unite with those who, like Emerson, had produced it; that first impulse thus forming, by cohesion, a well-defined circle of contributors who held for a time the visible leadership in American letters.

That which saved this circle from becoming a clique and a mere mutual admiration society was its fortunate variety of personal temperaments. Emerson, Hawthorne, Whittier, Holmes, Longfellow, and Lowell, to name only

the six most commonly selected as the representatives of this period, were really so dissimilar in many ways that they could not possibly duplicate one another, — indeed, could not always understand one another; and thus they were absolutely prevented from imposing on Boston anything like the yoke which Christopher North at one time imposed on Edinburgh. This was still more true of others just outside the circle, — Motley, Parkman, Thoreau, — and in this way the essential variety in unity was secured. Then there were other men, almost equally gifted, who touched the circle, or might have touched it but that they belonged to the class of which Emerson says, "Of what use is genius if its focus be a little too short or a little too long?" — Alcott, Ellery Channing, Weiss, Wasson, Brownlee Brown, each of whom bequeathed to posterity only a name, or some striking anecdote or verse, instead of a well-defined fame.

It is an embarrassment, in dealing with any past period of literary history, that we have to look at its participants not merely as they now seem, but as they appeared in their day, and we must calculate their parallax. The men who in those years were actually creating American literature — creating it anew, that is, after the earlier and already subsiding impulse given by

Irving and Cooper — do not retain the same relative precedence to which they at first seemed entitled; Emerson and Hawthorne having held their own more indisputably than the rest of the group. Some who distinctly formed a part of the original Atlantic circle have indeed failed to develop staying power. It would have scarcely appeared possible, in those days, that the brilliant and popular Whipple, who was at first thought a second Macaulay, should be at the end of the century an almost vanished force, while the eccentric and unsuccessful Thoreau — whom Lowell and even his own neighbors set aside as a mere imitator of Emerson — is still growing in international fame. I remember well that when I endeavored to enlist Judge Hoar, the leading citizen of Concord, in an effort to persuade Miss Thoreau to allow her brother's journals to be printed, he heard me partly through, and then quickly said, "But you have left unsettled the preliminary question, Why should any one care to have Thoreau's journals put in print?" I had to abandon the argument as clearly hopeless. It is also plain from Theodore Parker's correspondence that his estimate of Thoreau was but little higher than Judge Hoar's.

My own relation to this circle was the humble one of a man younger than the rest, brought

up under their influence, yet naturally independent, not to say self-willed, and very much inclined to live his own life. I had long before noted with delight in Plutarch the tale of the young Cicero consulting the Delphic oracle, and being there advised to live for himself, and not to take the opinions of others for his guide, — this answer being called by Niebuhr "one of the oracles which might tempt one to believe in the actual inspiration of the goddess." There was not one of these older men whom I had not sometimes felt free to criticise, with the presumption of youth; complaining of Emerson as being inorganic in structure; finding Whittier sometimes crude, Hawthorne bloodless in style, Holmes a trifler, Longfellow occasionally commonplace, Lowell often arrogant. All this criticism was easier because I then lived at a distance from Boston. At times, no doubt, I was disposed to fancy myself destined to unite all their virtues and avoid all their faults, while at other moments I felt, more reasonably, that I might be of some use in gathering the scattered crumbs from their table. It is quite certain that I was greatly pleased when I had sent to the "Atlantic Monthly" my first contribution, "Saints and their Bodies," and saw it printed in the fifth number; it being later characterized by Holmes as "an admirable paper," and he also

designating me as "a young friend" of his, — a phrase which awakened, I regret to say, some scarcely veiled irreverence on the part of a young fellow at the Worcester Gymnastic Club, of which I was then president. Alas, I was already thirty-three years old, and youth is merciless. Nor can I wonder at the criticism when I recall that the daring boy who made it died a few years after in the Civil War, a brevet brigadier-general, at the age of twenty.

I had previously written an article for the "North American Review," another for the "Christian Examiner," and three papers in prose for "Putnam's Magazine," one of these latter being a description of a trip to Mount Katahdin, written as a *jeu d'esprit* in the assumed character of a lady of the party. A few poems of mine had also been accepted by the last-named periodical; but these had attracted little notice, and the comparative *éclat* attendant on writing for the "Atlantic Monthly" made it practically, in my case, the beginning of a literary life. I was at once admitted to the Atlantic Club, an informal dinner of contributors in those days, and at first found it enjoyable. Before this I had belonged to a larger club, — rather short-lived, but including some of the same men, — the Town and Country Club, organized in 1849, at Boston. The earlier club

had no dinners; in fact, it erred on the side of asceticism, being formed, as Emerson declared, largely to afford a local habitation and dignified occupation to Mr. Alcott. Had its christening been left to the latter, a rhetorical grandeur would have belonged to its very opening; for he only hesitated whether the "Olympian Club" or the "Pan Club" would be the more suitable designation. Lowell marred the dignity of the former proposal by suggesting the name "Club of Hercules" as a substitute for "Olympian;" and since the admission of women was a vexed question at the outset, Lowell thought the "Patty Pan" quite appropriate. Upon this question, indeed, the enterprise very nearly went to pieces; and Mr. Sanborn has printed in his "Life of Alcott" a characteristic letter from Emerson to myself, after I had, in order to test the matter, placed the names of Elizabeth Peabody and Mary Lowell Putnam — Lowell's sister, and also well known as a writer — on the nomination book. Emerson himself, with one of those serene and lofty *coups d'état* of which only the saints are capable, took a pen and erased these names, although the question had not yet come up for decision, but was still pending when the erasure was made. Another vexed subject was the admission of colored members, the names of Frederick Douglass

and Charles Lenox Remond being proposed. This Lowell strongly favored, but wrote to me that he thought Emerson would vote against it; indeed, Emerson, as he himself admitted to me, was one of that minority of anti-slavery men who confessed to a mild natural colorphobia, controlled only by moral conviction. These names were afterwards withdrawn; but the Town and Country Club died a natural death before the question of admitting women was finally settled.

That matter was not, however, the occasion of the final catastrophe, which was brought on by Falstaff's remediless disease, a consumption of the purse. Ellery Channing said that the very name of the club had been fatal to it; that it promised an impossible alliance between Boston lawyers, who desired only a smoking-room, and, on the other hand, as he declared, a number of country ministers, who expected to be boarded and lodged, and to have their washing done, whenever they came up to the city. In either case, the original assessment of five dollars was clearly too small, and the utter hopelessness of raising any additional amount was soon made manifest. After the club had existed six months, a circular was issued, asking the members to remit, if possible, two dollars each before April 4, 1850, that the debts of the

club might be paid, and their fellow members "be relieved from an unequal burden." This sealed the doom of the enterprise, and "the rest is silence." It is now far easier to organize a University Club on a fifty or one hundred dollar basis than it was then to skim the cream of intellectual Boston at five dollars a head. The fine phrase introduced by Mr. Alcott into the constitution, "the economies of the club," proved only too appropriate, as the organization had to be very economical indeed. Its membership, nevertheless, was well chosen and varied. At its four monthly gatherings, the lecturers were Theodore Parker, Henry James the elder, Henry Giles (then eminent as a Shakespeare lecturer), and the Rev. William B. Greene, afterwards colonel of the First Massachusetts Heavy Artillery. Among the hundred or more members, there were well-known lawyers, as Sumner, E. R. Hoar, Hillard, Burlingame, Bemis, and Sewall; and there were clergymen, as Parker, Hedge, W. H. Channing, Hill, Bartol, Frothingham, and Hale; the only non-Unitarian clergyman being the Rev. John O. Choules, a cheery little English Baptist, who had been round the world with Commodore Vanderbilt in his yacht, and might well feel himself equal to any worldly companionship. The medical profession was represented by Drs.

Channing, Bowditch, Howe, and Loring; and the mercantile world by the two brothers Ward, Franklin Haven, William D. Ticknor, and James T. Fields. Art appeared only in John Cheney, the engraver, and literature in the persons of Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Lowell, and Whipple. These five authors were contributors to the "Atlantic Monthly," and took part also in the early dinners of the Atlantic Club.

Holmes, as it appears from his biography, confounded the Atlantic Club, in his later recollections, with its larger coeval, the Saturday Club; but they will be found very clearly discriminated in Longfellow's journals. During the first year of the magazine under Phillips & Sampson's management, there were monthly dinners, in or near Boston, under the generalship of Francis H. Underwood, the office editor, and John C. Wyman, then his assistant. The most notable of these gatherings was undoubtedly that held at the Revere House, on occasion of Mrs. Stowe's projected departure for Europe. It was the only one to which ladies were invited, and the invitation was accepted with a good deal of hesitation by Mrs. Stowe, and with a distinct guarantee that no wine should be furnished for the guests. Other feminine contributors were invited, but for various

reasons no ladies appeared except Mrs. Stowe and Miss Harriet Prescott (now Mrs. Spofford), who had already won fame by a story called "In a Cellar," the scene of which was laid in Paris, and which was so thoroughly French in all its appointments that it was suspected of being a translation from that language, although much inquiry failed to reveal the supposed original. It may be well to add that the honest young author had so little appreciation of the high compliment thus paid her that she indignantly proposed to withdraw her manuscript in consequence. These two ladies arrived promptly, and the gentlemen were kept waiting, not greatly to their minds, in the hope that other fair contributors would appear. When at last it was decided to proceed without further delay, Dr. Holmes and I were detailed to escort the ladies to the dining-room: he as the head of the party, and I as the only one who knew the younger lady. As we went upstairs the vivacious Autocrat said to me, "Can I venture it? Do you suppose that Mrs. Stowe disapproves of me very much?" — he being then subject to severe criticism from the more conservative theologians. The lady was gracious, however, and seemed glad to be rescued at last from her wearisome waiting. She came downstairs wearing a green wreath, of which

Longfellow says in his diary (July 9, 1859) that he "thought it very becoming."

We seated ourselves at table, Mrs. Stowe at Lowell's right, and Miss Prescott at Holmes's, I next to her, Edmund Quincy next to me. Dr. Stowe was at Holmes's left, Whittier at his; and Longfellow, Underwood, John Wyman, and others were present. I said at once to Miss Prescott, "This is a new edition of 'Evelina, or a Young Lady's Entrance into the World.' Begin at the beginning: what did you and Mrs. Stowe talk about for three quarters of an hour?" She answered demurely, "Nothing, except that she once asked me what o'clock it was, and I told her I did n't know." There could hardly be a better illustration of that curious mixture of *mauvaise honte* and indifference which often marred the outward manners of that remarkable woman. It is very likely that she had not been introduced to her companion, and perhaps had never heard her name; but imagine any kindly or gracious person of middle age making no effort to relieve the shyness of a young girl stranded with herself during three quarters of an hour of enforced seclusion!

The modest entertainment proceeded; conversation set in, but there was a visible awkwardness, partly from the presence of two

ladies, one of whom was rather silent by reason of youth, and the other by temperament; and moreover, the thawing influence of wine was wanting. There were probably no men of the party, except Whittier and myself, who did not habitually drink it, and various little jokes began to circle *sotto voce* at the table; a suggestion, for instance, from Longfellow, that Miss Prescott might be asked to send down into her Cellar for the wine she had described so well, since Mrs. Stowe would allow none abovestairs. Soon, however, a change came over the aspect of affairs. My neighbor on the right, Edmund Quincy, called a waiter mysteriously, and giving him his glass of water remained tranquilly while it was being replenished. It came back suffused with a rosy hue. Some one else followed his example, and presently the "conscious water" was blushing at various points around the board, although I doubt whether Holmes, with water-drinkers two deep on each side of him, got really his share of the coveted beverage. If he had, it might have modified the course of his talk, for I remember that he devoted himself largely to demonstrating to Dr. Stowe that all swearing doubtless originated in the free use made by the pulpit of sacred words and phrases; while Lowell, at the other end of the table, was maintaining for Mrs.

Stowe's benefit that "Tom Jones" was the best novel ever written. This line of discussion may have been lively, but was not marked by eminent tact; and Whittier, indeed, told me afterwards that Dr. and Mrs. Stowe agreed in saying to him that while the company at the club was no doubt distinguished, the conversation was not quite what they had been led to expect. Yet Dr. Stowe was of a kindly nature and perhaps was not seriously disturbed even when Holmes assured him that there were in Boston whole families not perceptibly affected by Adam's fall; as for instance, the family of Ware.

In the minor gatherings of the Atlantic Club I became gradually conscious of a certain monotony. Neither Emerson nor Longfellow nor Whittier was a great talker, and though the conversation was always lively enough, it had too much the character of a dialogue between Holmes and Lowell. Neither of these had received the beneficent discipline of English dining-rooms, where, as I learned long after, one is schooled into self-restraint; and even if I never heard in London any talk that was on the whole so clever as theirs, yet in the end the carving is almost as important as the meat. Living in Worcester, I saw little of my fellow contributors except at those dinners, though Emerson frequently lectured in that

growing city, and I occasionally did the same thing at Concord, where I sometimes stayed at his house. It was a delight to be in his study, to finger his few and well-read books; a discipline of humility to have one's modest portmanteau carried upstairs by Plato himself; a joy to see him, relapsed into a happy grandparent, hold a baby on his knee, and wave his playful finger above the little clutching hands, saying joyously, "This boy is a little philosopher; he philosophizes about everything." To Worcester came also Alcott and Thoreau, from time to time; the former to give those mystic monologues which he called conversations, and which were liable to be disturbed and even checked when any other participant offered anything but meek interrogatories. Thoreau came to take walks in the woods, or perhaps to Wachusett, with Harrison Blake, his later editor, and with Theophilus Brown, the freshest and most original mind in Worcester, by vocation a tailor, and sending out more sparkles of wit and humor over his measuring-tape and scissors than any one else could extract from Rabelais or Montaigne. Sometimes I joined the party, and found Thoreau a dry humorist, and also a good walker; while Alcott, although he too walked, usually steered for a convenient log in the edge of the first grove, and, seat-

ing himself there, "conversed" once more. It may be that there are men now as quaint and original as were easily accessible in those days; but if so, I wish some one would favor me with a letter of introduction.

It was perhaps an advantage to me, and certainly a great convenience, that I did not begin writing for magazines until I was above thirty. I thus escaped the preliminary ordeal of rejection, a thing which I have indeed encountered but once in respect to prose papers, during my whole literary life. As Lowell, Holmes, and Underwood all heartily approved my early essays, I was tempted to stretch their range wider and try experiments. This was not so much from any changeableness or a wish to be credited with versatility, — a quality which I commonly distrusted and criticised in others, — but because there were so many interesting things to write about; and because I had possibly been rather too much impressed by one of Emerson's perilous maxims as applied to any writer, "If he has hit the mark, let others shatter the target." If my critics agreed that I could write a fairly good historical essay such as "A Charge with Prince Rupert," or a good outdoor paper such as "A Procession of the Flowers," it seemed better to try my hand at something else. There was no indolence about

this; it was simply an eager desire to fill all the parts. Such versatility makes life very enjoyable, but perhaps not so really useful or successful as a career like that of my contemporary, Francis Parkman, who used to be surrounded, even in college, by books of Indian travel and French colonial history, and who kept at work for half a century on his vast theme until he achieved for himself a great literary monument. He was really a specialist before the days of specialism. To adopt a different method, as I did, is to put one's self too much in the position of a celebrated horse once owned by a friend of mine, — a horse which had never won a race, but which was prized as having gained a second place in more races than any other horse in America. Yet it is to be remembered that there is a compensation in all these matters: the most laborious historian is pretty sure to be superseded within thirty years — as it has already been prophesied that even Parkman will be — by the mere accumulation of new material; while the more discursive writer may perchance happen on some felicitous statement that shall rival in immortality Fletcher of Saltoun's one sentence, or the single sonnet of Blanco White.

In 1859 the "Atlantic Monthly" passed into the hands of Ticknor & Fields, the junior pub-

lisher becoming finally its editor. It was a change of much importance to all its contributors, and greatly affected my own literary life. Lowell had been, of course, an appreciative and a sympathetic editor, yet sometimes dilatory and exasperating. Thus, a paper of mine on Theodore Parker, which should have appeared directly after the death of its subject, was delayed for five months by being accidentally put under a pile of unexamined manuscripts. Lowell had, moreover, some conservative reactions, and my essay "Ought Women to Learn the Alphabet?" which would now seem very innocent, and probably had a wider circulation than any other magazine article I ever wrote, was not accepted without some shaking of the head, though it was finally given the place of honor in the number. Fields had the advantage over Lowell of being both editor and publisher, so that he had a free hand as to paying for articles. The prices then paid were lower than now, but were raised steadily; and he first introduced the practice of paying for each manuscript on acceptance, though he always lamented that this failed of its end so far as he was individually concerned. His object was to quiet the impatience of those whose contributions were delayed; but he declared that such persons complained more than

ever, saying, "Since you valued my contribution so highly as to pay for it, you surely should print it at once." He had a virtue which I have never known in any other editor or publisher, — that of volunteering to advance money on prospective articles, yet to be written; and he did this more than once to me. I have also known him to increase the amount paid, on finding that an author particularly needed the money, especially if it were the case of a woman. His sympathy with struggling women was always very great; and I think he was the only one in the early "Atlantic" circle, except Whittier and myself, — with Emerson also, latterly, — who favored woman suffrage. This financial kindliness was a part of his general theory of establishing a staff, in which effort he really succeeded, most of his contributors then writing only for him, — an aim which his successors abandoned, as doubtless became inevitable in view of the rapid multiplication of magazines. Certainly there was something very pleasant about Fields's policy on this point; and perhaps he petted us all rather too much. He had some of the defects of his qualities, — could not help being a little of a flatterer, and sometimes, though not always, evaded the telling of wholesome truths.

I happened to be one of his favorites; he

even wished me, at one time, to undertake the whole critical department, which I luckily declined, although it appears by the index that I wrote more largely for the first twenty volumes of the magazine than any other contributor except Lowell and Holmes. Fields was constantly urging me to attempt fiction, and when I somewhat reluctantly followed his advice, he thought better of the result, I believe, than any one else did; for my story of "Malbone," especially, he prophesied a fame which the public has not confirmed. Yet he was not indiscriminate in his praise, and suggested some amendments which improved that tale very much. He was capable also of being influenced by argument, and was really the only editor I have ever encountered whose judgment I could move for an instant by any cajoling; editors being, as a rule, a race made of adamant, as they should be. On the other hand, he advised strongly against my writing the "Young Folks' History of the United States," which nevertheless turned out incomparably the most successful venture I ever made, having sold to the extent of two hundred thousand copies, and still selling well after twenty years. His practical judgment was thus not infallible, but it came nearer to it than that of any other literary man I have ever known. With all his desire to

create a staff, Fields was always eagerly looking out for new talent, and was ever prompt to counsel and encourage. He liked, of course, to know eminent men ; and his geese were apt to be swans, yet he was able to discriminate. He organized Dickens's readings, for instance, and went to every one of them, yet confessed frankly that their pathos was a failure ; that Little Nell was unreal, and Paul Dombey a tiresome creature whose death was a relief. Fields was really a keen judge of character, and had his own fearless standards. I once asked him which he liked the better personally, Thackeray or Dickens, and he replied, after a moment's reflection, "Dickens, because Thackeray enjoyed telling questionable stories, a thing which Dickens never did."

There has been endless discussion as to the true worth of the literary movement of which the circle of "Atlantic" writers was the source. By some, no doubt, it has been described with exaggerated claims, and by others with a disapprobation quite as unreasonable. Time alone can decide the precise award ; the essential fact is that in this movement American literature was born, or, if not born, — for certainly Irving and Cooper had preceded, — was at least set on its feet. Whether it could not have been better born is a profitless question. This group

of writers was doubtless a local product; but so is every new variety of plum or pear which the gardener finds in his garden. He does not quarrel with it for having made its appearance in some inconvenient corner instead of in the centre, nor does he think it unpardonable that it did not show itself everywhere at once; the thing of importance is that it has arrived. The new literary impulse was indigenous, and, as far as it felt an exotic influence, that force was at any rate not English; it was French, Italian, and above all German, so far as its external factors went. Nothing could be much further from the truth than the late remark of an essayist that Boston is "almost the sole survival upon our soil of a purely English influence." As a matter of fact, the current of thought which between 1816 and 1818 took our whole American educational system away from the English tradition, and substituted the German methods, had been transmitted through four young men from New England, who had studied together at Göttingen. These reporters had sent back the daring assertion that while our cisatlantic schools and colleges had nothing to learn from England, — not even from the Oxford and Cambridge of that day, — they had, on the contrary, everything to learn from the German institutions. The students in question

were Cogswell, Everett, Ticknor, and, in a less degree, Bancroft. Three of these went from Harvard College, Everett and Bancroft at the expense of the university; while Ticknor went from Dartmouth. They all brought back to Harvard what they could not find in England, but had gained in Germany; Everett writing to my father in a letter which lies before me (dated June 6, 1818), "There is more teaching and more learning in our American Cambridge than there is in Oxford and Cambridge put together." They laid the foundation for non-English training not only in Boston, but in America, at a time when the very best literary journal in New York, and indeed in this country, was called "The Albion," and was English through and through.

It was, in fact, made a temporary reproach to the early Transcendental movement that it was too French or too German, and not English enough; and when George Ripley's library was sold, it proved to be by far the best German library in New England except Theodore Parker's. There was at that time an eager clamoring not only for German, but for French, Italian, and even Swedish literature; then, when the "Atlantic" circle succeeded to the domain of the Transcendentalists, it had in Longfellow the most accomplished translator of his

day; and the Continental influence still went at least side by side with the English, if it did not prevail over it. But behind this question of mere intellectual aliment lay the problem whether we should have a literature of our own; and it was a strength, not a weakness, in these men when they aimed, in the words of young Robert Bartlett, to make us "classic to ourselves." Probably no one who did not live in those days can fully realize what it was to us to have our own aspects of nature, our own historic scenes, our own types of character, our own social problems, brought up and given a prominent place. The mere substitution of bobolink and oriole for lark and nightingale was a delicious novelty. At any rate, for good or evil, the transition was made. If the achievement took on too much flavor of moral earnestness, as is now complained, this may have been inevitable. In hewing down the forest, the axe must have weight as well as edge. In the work that obtruded itself while this literature was being created, — the crushing of American slavery by the strong hand, — it was not found that this moral force had been a thing superfluous. It was not a Bostonian, but a New Yorker (Mr. John Jay Chapman), who lately said of Emerson, "It will not be denied that he sent ten thousand sons to the war."

It is certain, at any rate, that a belief like this, in a literature actually forming before my eyes, was an important part of my happiness during my Worcester life, and that the work growing out of it became by degrees a serious interference with that required by the Free Church, and led me to quit the latter. I had also many other affairs on hand, being, as Mr. Alcott said of me, "a man of tasks;" and all these, while multiplying enjoyment and usefulness, were crowding too much on one another. I interested myself in the new question of a prohibitory liquor law, was for a time secretary of the state committee, and also took a hand — again aided by Martin Stowell — in enforcing the law in Worcester. Experience brought me to the opinion, which I have ever since held, that such a law is useless except under the limitations of local option, so that the moral pressure of each locality may be behind its enforcement.

I have already spoken of continued anti-slavery work in Worcester. I was also deeply interested in the problem of discharged convicts, having in that direction one experience so interesting that I must find room for it. In another town of Massachusetts I had known a young man of most respectable family, who, after a series of skillful burglaries, had been sent to prison on an eight years sentence. He

had there sustained an excellent character, and, after visiting him just before liberation, I had brought him to Worcester, and placed him in a family of worthy English people belonging to the Free Church, who carried on at home a little manufacturing business which he readily learned. Of course they were told his story, and their willingness to take him was the more admirable inasmuch as they had once tried much the same experiment and had been deceived. He behaved perfectly well, yet told me frankly that he used to loiter before jewelers' windows and think how easily he could get possession of the glittering treasures inside. He ultimately married a farmer's daughter in a village near Worcester; he set up a little shop on very scanty capital, but made no effort to eke it out by any dishonorable action; and when the war came he somehow got a lieutenant's commission, but for some reason was never assigned to any regiment, and eventually died of disease. Here was a life saved from further wrong, and by the simplest means; and when, in later life, I attended as a delegate the meetings of prison reformers in Europe, I was firm in the conviction that such things as I have described could be done.

As to work within the circle of my own people, I found plenty of it, and on the whole

enjoyed it. They had almost all come from more conservative religious bodies, and some of the best of them were Spiritualists. Only one of the local clergy would exchange with me, — the exception being, as may be easily believed, Edward Everett Hale, who had not yet migrated to Boston, — but I was gradually brought into amicable relations with many of the others, and had no reason to complain. I was on the school committee until I was dropped, during the Know-Nothing excitement, for defending the right of a Roman Catholic father to decide which version of the Scriptures his child should read in school. Twice I have thus been honorably dismissed from school committees; for the same thing happened again in Newport, Rhode Island, ten years later, in consequence of the part I took in securing the abolition of separate colored schools. In both cases I was reinstated later; being appointed on a special examination committee in Worcester together with a Roman Catholic priest, and on the regular committee in Newport with a colored clergyman; thus "bringing my sheaves with me," as a clever woman said. I had a hand in organizing the great Worcester Public Library, and was one of its early board of trustees, at a time when we little dreamed of its expansion and widespread usefulness.

The old love for natural history survived, and I undertook again the microscopic work which I had begun in Newburyport under the guidance of an accomplished biologist, Dr. Henry C. Perkins. He had also introduced me to the works of Oken and Richard Owen; and I had written for the "Christian Examiner" (July, 1852) a paper called "Man and Nature," given first as a lyceum lecture, which expressed something of that morning glow before sunrise which existed after the views of Goethe and Oken had been made public, but when Darwin's great discoveries were yet to be achieved. In Worcester I did a great deal in the way of field observation, and organized, with Hale and others, the local Natural History Society, one branch of which, the botanical club, still bears my name. I also read many books on anthropology, and wrote for the "Atlantic" various essays on kindred themes, which were afterwards published in a volume as "Out-Door Papers." The preparation for this work gave that "enormity of pleasure," in Wordsworth's phrase, which only the habit of minute and written observation can convey; and I had many happy days, especially in the then unprofaned regions of Lake Quinsigamond. With all this revived the old love of athletic exercises: I was president of a gymnastic club, a

skating club, and a cricket club, playing in several match games with the latter. I never actually belonged to a volunteer engine company, such as then existed everywhere, — it is a wonder that I did not, — but was elected an honorary member of Tiger Engine Company Number 6, though unluckily the Tigers engaged in a general fight at their annual meeting, before I could join, and the company was dissolved by the city fathers in consequence; so that this crowning distinction was at the last moment wrested from me. Thus passed the years, until the Kansas excitement burst upon the nation and opened the way to new experiences.

# VII

## KANSAS AND JOHN BROWN

Coming into Boston Harbor in September, 1856, after a long and stormy passage in a sailing vessel from the island of Fayal, the passengers, of whom I was one, awaited with eager interest the arrival of the pilot. He proved to be one of the most stolid and reticent of his tribe, as impenetrable to our curiosity as were his own canvas garments to raindrops. At last, as if to shake us off, he tugged from some remote pocket a torn fragment of a daily newspaper, — large enough to set before our eyes at a glance the momentous news of the assault on Charles Sumner in the United States Senate, and of the blockading of the Missouri River against Free State emigrants. Arrived on shore, my immediate party went at once to Worcester; and the public meeting held by my friends to welcome me back became also a summons to call out volunteer emigrants for Kansas. Worcester had been thoroughly wakened to the needs of the new Territory through the formation of the Emigrant Aid

Society, which had done much good by directing public attention to the opportunities offered by Kansas, though the enterprise had already lost some momentum by the obvious limitations of its method of "organized emigration." It had been shown that it was easy to get people to go together to a new colony, but hard to keep them united after they got there, since they could not readily escape the American impulse to disregard organization and go to work, each for himself; this desire being as promptly visible in the leaders as in anybody else. Moreover, it seemed necessary to arm any party of colonists more openly and thoroughly than had been the policy of the Emigrant Aid Society; and so a new movement became needful. A committee was appointed, of which I was secretary, with a view to sending a series of parties from Worcester; and of these we in the end furnished three.

First, however, I was sent to St. Louis to meet a party of Massachusetts emigrants, under Dr. Calvin Cutter, who had been turned back from the river by the Missourians, or "Border Ruffians," as they had then begun to be called. I was charged with funds to provide for the necessities of this body, and was also to report on the practicability of either breaking the river blockade or flanking it. A

little inquiry served to show that only the latter method would as yet be available. Events moved rapidly ; a national committee was soon formed, with headquarters at Chicago, and it was decided to send all future emigrants across Iowa and Nebraska, fighting their way, if necessary, into Kansas. Our three parties, accordingly, went by that route ; the men being provided with rifles, revolvers, and camp equipage. Two of these parties made their rendezvous in Worcester, one under command of my friend Stowell; the third party was formed largely of Maine lumbermen, recruited in a body for the service. I never saw thirty men of finer physique, as they strode through Boston in their red shirts and rough trousers to meet us at the Emigrant Aid Society rooms, which had been kindly lent us for the purpose. The rest of the men came to us singly, from all over New England, some of the best being from Vermont, including William Thompson, afterwards John Brown's son-in-law, killed at Harper's Ferry.

I have never ceased to regret that all the correspondence relating to these companies, though most carefully preserved for years, was finally lost through a casualty, and they must go forever unrecorded ; but it was all really a rehearsal in advance of the great enlistments of the Civil War. The men were personally of

as high a grade as the later recruits, perhaps even higher; they were of course mostly undisciplined, and those who had known something of military service — as in the Mexican War, for instance — were usually the hardest to manage, save and except the stalwart lumbermen, who were from the beginning a thorn in the flesh to the worthy Orthodox Congregational clergyman whom it became necessary to put in charge of this final party of emigrants. He wrote back to me that if I had any lingering doubts of the doctrine of total depravity, I had better organize another party of Maine lumbermen and pilot them to Kansas. Sympathy was certainly due to him; and yet I should have liked to try the experiment.

Being appointed as an agent of the National Kansas Committee, I went out in September, 1856, to meet and direct this very party, and others — including several hundred men — which had been collected on the Nebraska border. The events of the six weeks following were described by me in a series of letters, signed "Worcester," in the "New York Tribune," and later collected in a pamphlet entitled "A Ride through Kansas." It was a period when history was being made very rapidly, — a period which saw a policy of active oppression at last put down and defeated, although backed

by the action or sustained by the vacillation of the national government. The essential difference between the Northern and the Southern forces in Kansas at that period was that the Northern men went as *bona fide* settlers, and the Southerners mainly to break up elections and so make it a Slave Territory. Every member of our Worcester parties signed a pledge to settle in Kansas, and nearly all kept it. On the other hand, the parties from South Carolina and Virginia, whom I afterwards encountered, had gone there simply on a lark, meaning to return home when it was over, as they freely admitted. This difference of material, rather than any superiority of organization, was what finally gave Kansas to freedom.

The end of Western railway communication was then Iowa City, in Iowa, and those who would reach Kansas had six hundred miles farther to walk or ride. I myself rode across Iowa for four days and nights on the top of a stage-coach, in the path of my emigrants, — watching the sun go down blazing, and sometimes pear-shaped, over the prairie horizon, just as it goes down beyond the ocean, and then seeing it rise in the same way. When the stage at last rolled me into Nebraska City, it seemed as if I had crossed the continent, for I had passed through Council Bluffs, which in

my school geography had figured as the very outpost of the nation. Once arrived there, I felt as bewildered as a little boy on the Canadian railway who, when the conductor announced the small village called London, waked from a doze and exclaimed in my hearing, "Do we really pass through London — that great city?" One of the first needful duties was to visit our party of lumbermen and restore peace, if possible, between them and their officers. For this purpose I made my first stump speech, in a literal sense, standing on a simple pedestal of that description, and reasoning with the mutineers to the best of my ability. They had behaved so like grown-up children that I fear my discourse was somewhat in the line adopted in later years by a brilliant woman of my acquaintance, whose son had got into a college difficulty. I asked her, "Did you talk the matter over with him?" "Certainly," she said eagerly. "I reasoned with him. I said to him, 'L——, you are a great fool!'" It was not necessary to be quite so plain-spoken in this case; and as I was fortified by the fact of having all their means of subsistence in a money-belt about my waist, the advantage was clearly on my side, and some order was finally brought out of chaos.

Soon after arriving I had to drive from Ne-

braska City to Tabor on an errand, over about twenty miles of debatable ground, absolutely alone. It had been swept by the hostile parties of both factions; there was no more law than in the Scottish Highlands; every swell of the rolling prairie offered a possible surprise, and I had some of the stirring sensations of a moss-trooper. Never before in my life had I been, distinctively and unequivocally, outside of the world of human law; it had been ready to protect me, even when I disobeyed it. Here it had ceased to exist; my Sharp's rifle, my revolvers, — or, these failing, my own ingenuity and ready wit, — were all the protection I had. It was a delightful sensation; I could quote to myself from Browning's magnificent soliloquy in "Colombe's Birthday:" —

"When is man strong until he feels alone?"

and there came to mind some thrilling passages from Mackay's "Ballads of the Cavaliers and Roundheads" or from the "Jacobite Minstrelsy." On this very track a carrier had been waylaid and killed by the Missourians only a few days before. The clear air, the fresh breeze, gave an invigorating delight, impaired by nothing but the yellow and muddy streams of that region, which seemed to my New England eye such a poor accompaniment for the land of the

free. Tabor itself was then known far and wide as a Free State town, from the warm sympathy of its people for the struggles of their neighbors, and I met there with the heartiest encouragement, and had an escort back.

The tavern where I lodged in Nebraska City was miserable enough; the beds being fearfully dirty, the food indigestible, and the table eagerly beset by three successive relays of men. One day a commotion took place in the street: people ran out to the doors; and some thirty rough-riders came cantering up to the hostelry. They might have been border raiders for all appearance of cavalry order: some rode horses, some mules; some had bridles, others had lariats of rope; one man had on a slight semblance of uniform, and seemed a sort of lieutenant. The leader was a thin man of middle age, in a gray woolen shirt, with keen eyes, smooth tongue, and a suggestion of courteous and even fascinating manners; a sort of Prince Rupert of humbler grade. This was the then celebrated Jim Lane, afterwards Senator James H. Lane, of the United States Congress; at this time calling himself only "Major-General commanding the Free State Forces of Kansas." He was now retreating from the Territory with his men, in deference to the orders of the new United States governor, Geary, who was making

an attempt, more or less serious, to clear Kansas of all armed bands. Lane stopped two days in Nebraska City, and I did something towards renewing the clothing of his band. He made a speech to the citizens of the town, — they being then half balanced between anti-slavery and pro-slavery sympathies, — and I have seldom heard eloquence more thrilling, more tactful, better adjusted to the occasion. Ralph Waldo Emerson, I remember, was much impressed by a report of this speech as sent by me to some Boston newspaper. Lane went with me, I think, to see our emigrants, encamped near by; gave me some capital suggestions as to our march into the Territory; and ended by handing me a bit of crumpled paper, appointing me a member of his staff with the rank of brigadier-general.

As I rode out of Nebraska City on the march, next day, my companion, Samuel F. Tappan, riding at my side, took occasion to exhibit casually a similar bit of paper in his own possession; and we thus found that the Kansas guerrilla leader carried out the habit of partisan chiefs in all history, who have usually made up in titles and honors what they could not bestow in actual emoluments. After this discovery Tappan and I rode on in conscious inward importance, a sort of dignity *à deux*,

yet not knowing but that at any moment some third brigadier-general might cross our path. We accompanied and partially directed the march of about a hundred and sixty men, with some twenty women and children. There were twenty-eight wagons, all but eight being drawn by horses. The nightly tents made quite an imposing encampment; while some of the men fed and watered the stock, others brought wood from far and near, others cleaned their rifles, others prepared the wagons for sleeping; the cooks fried pork and made bread; women with their babies sat round the fire; and a saddler brought out his board and leather every night and made belts and holsters for the emigrants. Each man kept watch for an hour, striding in thick boots through the prairie grass heavy with frost. Danger had always to be guarded against, though we were never actually attacked; and while we went towards Kansas, we met armed parties day after day fleeing from it, hopeless of peace. When at last we reached the Kansas River, we found on its muddy banks nineteen wagons with emigrants, retreating with heavy hearts from the land of promise so eagerly sought two years before. "The Missourians could not conquer us," they said, "but Governor Geary has."

On my first morning in Lawrence, Kansas,

I waked before daybreak, and looking out saw the house surrounded by dragoons, each sitting silent on his horse. This again was a new experience in those ante-bellum days. A party of a hundred and fifty of these men had been sent to intercept us, we learned, under the command of Colonel Preston and Captain Walker of the United States Army; the latter luckily being an old acquaintance of my own. As a result, I went with Charles Robinson, the Free State governor, and James Redpath for a half-amicable, half-compulsory interview with the actual governor, Geary; and we parted, leaving everything undecided, — indeed, nothing ever seemed to be decided in Kansas; the whole destiny of the Territory was one of drifting, until it finally drifted into freedom. Yet in view of the fact that certain rifles which we had brought, and which had been left at Tabor, Iowa, for future emergencies, were the same weapons which ultimately armed John Brown and his men at Harper's Ferry, it is plain that neither Governor Geary's solicitude nor the military expedition of Colonel Preston was at all misplaced.

I formed that day a very unfavorable impression of Governor Geary, and a favorable one of Governor Robinson, and lived to modify both opinions. The former, though vacillating in

Kansas, did himself great credit afterwards in the Civil War ; while the latter did himself very little credit in Kansas politics, whose bitter hostilities and narrow vindictiveness he was the first to foster. Jealousy of the influence of Brown, Lane, and Montgomery led him in later years to be chiefly responsible for that curious myth concerning the Kansas conflict which has wholly taken possession of many minds, and has completely perverted the history of that State written by Professor Spring, — a theory to the effect that there existed from the beginning among the Free State people two well-defined parties, the one wishing to carry its ends by war, the other by peace. As a matter of fact there was no such division. In regard to the most extreme act of John Brown's Kansas career, the so-called " Pottawatomie massacre " of May 24, 1856, I can testify that in September of that year there appeared to be but one way of thinking among the Kansas Free State men, this being precisely the fact pointed out by Colonel William A. Phillips, in his " Conquest of Kansas," which is altogether the best and fairest book upon the confused history of that time and place. I heard of no one who did not approve of the act, and its beneficial effects were universally asserted, — Governor Robinson himself fully indorsing it

to me, and maintaining, like the rest, that it had given an immediate check to the armed aggressions of the Missourians.

It is certain that at a public meeting held at Lawrence, Kansas, three years later (December 15, 1859), Robinson supported resolutions saying that the act was done "from sad necessity;" that on August 30, 1877, at the unveiling of Brown's monument at Osawatomie, he compared Brown to Jesus Christ; and that on February 5, 1878, he wrote in a letter to James Hanway, "I never had much doubt that Captain Brown was the author of the blow at Pottawatomie, for the reason that he was the only man who comprehended the situation and saw the absolute necessity of some such blow and had the nerve to strike it." Personally, I have never fully reconciled myself to this vindication of "the blow;" but that Charles Robinson, after justifying it for nearly thirty years, and after the fighting men of the Territory (Brown, Lane, Montgomery) were dead, should have begun to pose as a non-resistant, and should later have spoken of "the punishment due Brown for his crimes in Kansas," — this appears to me to have been either simply disgraceful, or else the product of a disordered mind.

The people in Lawrence had been passing through a variety of scenes of danger and dis-

comfort before the arrival of our party; and though the Missouri attacks had practically ceased, their effects remained in the form of general poverty and of privations as to food, especially as regarded breadstuffs. The hotel and Governor Robinson's house had been burned, as well as many mills and bridges; some of the best citizens were in jail as prisoners of state, and their families were really suffering. When I visited these prisoners at Lecompton, one man reported to me that he had left six children at home, all ill, and his wife accidentally away and unable to get back; but he supposed that "some of the neighbors would look after them." Another had in his arms his crying baby, said to be the first child born in Lawrence, and named after the settlement. Such imprisonment was the lot of more than a hundred of the Free State men. In the more rural regions — though everything in Kansas was then rural, but treeless — there was a perpetual guerrilla warfare going on in a vague and desultory way; and the parties were so far defined that their labels attached even to dumb animals, and people spoke of an anti-slavery colt or a pro-slavery cow.

Several of us visited, near Blanton's Bridge, the ruins of a large mill, built by a Pennsylvanian named Straub. We met there his daugh-

ter, who was a noble-looking girl of twenty, but rather needlessly defiant in manner, as we thought, till at last she said frankly, "Why, I thought you were Missourians, and I was resolved that you should hear the truth." We being three to one, this attitude was certainly plucky; but I heard later that this girl had walked alone into the midst of the Missourians, while the mill was burning, and had called on one of them to give up her favorite horse which he had taken. This she did with such spirit that his comrades compelled him to dismount and surrender it. She mounted it and was riding away, when the man followed and attempted to get the halter from her hand; she held on; he took his bowie-knife and threatened to cut her hand off; she dared him to do it; he cut the rope close to her hand and got control of the horse. She slipped off, defeated; but presently two of the fellow's companions rode up and gave her the horse once more. It was a time when a horse was worth more than a life in Kansas, and we can estimate the completeness of the triumph.

As I had been urged to preach to the people of Lawrence, it seemed well to take for my text that which was employed by the Rev. John Martin on the Sunday after he had fought at Bunker Hill: "Be not ye afraid of them; re-

member the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses." Riding a few days after to Leavenworth, then a "Border Ruffian" town, to witness an election under the auspices of that faction, I found myself in a village provided with more than fifty liquor shops for two thousand inhabitants, while the doors of the hotel were almost barricaded with whiskey casks. Strangers were begged to take a hand in the voting, as if it were something to drink; I was several times asked to do this, and my plea that I was only a traveler was set aside as quite irrelevant. Many debated on the most available point at which to cast their pro-slavery votes — for the Free State men denied the validity of the election and would not vote at all — as coolly as a knot of village shopkeepers might debate whether to go to Boston or New York for purchases. Once the conversation began to grow rather personal. Said one man, just from Lecompton, "Tell you what, we 've found out one thing: there 's a preacher going about here preaching politics." "Fact?" and "Is that so?" were echoed with virtuous indignation on all sides. "That 's so," continued he, "and he fixes it this way: first, he has his text and preaches religion; then he drops that and pitches into

politics; and then he drops that too, and begins about the sufferin' niggers" (this with ineffable contempt). "And what 's more, he 's here in Leavenworth now." "What 's his name?" exclaimed several eagerly. "Just what I don't know," was the sorrowful reply, "and I should n't know him if I saw him; but he 's here, boys, and in a day or two there 'll be some gentlemen here that know him." (At my last speech in Lawrence I had been warned that three Missouri spies were present.) "It 's well we 've got him here, to take care of him," said one. "Won't our boys enjoy running him out of town?" added another affectionately; while I listened with dubious enjoyment, thinking that I might perhaps afford useful information. But the "gentlemen" did not appear, or else were in search of higher game; and I was to leave town that night, at any rate, for St. Louis.

I took the steamer Cataract on October 9, 1856, and went down the river; my chief companions being a large party of youths from Virginia and South Carolina, who had come into the Territory of Kansas confessedly to take a hand in the election, and also in the fighting, should a chance be offered. They were drunken, gambling, quarrelsome boys, but otherwise affable enough, with the pleasant

manners and soft accent of the South. Nothing could be more naïve than their confidences. "Don't you remember," said one, with a sort of tender regret, "how when we went up the river we were all of us drunk all the time?" "So we would be now," replied his friend sadly, "only we ain't got no money." They said that they had been inveigled into coming by Atchison and others, on the promise of support for a year and fifty dollars bonus, but that they had got neither, and had barely enough to take them to St. Louis. "Let me once get home," said the same youth who made the above confession, "and I 'd stay at home, sure. It has cost me the price of one good nigger just for board and liquor, since I left home." Curiously enough, in reading a copy of Mrs. Stowe's "Dred," just published, which I had bought in Lawrence, I opened soon after on the apt Scriptural quotation, "Woe unto them, for they have cast lots for my people, . . . and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink!"

The few Free State men on board were naturally not aggressive, although we spent a whole day on a sand-bank, a thing not conducive to serenity of mind; but the steamer which pulled us off had on board the secretary of the Kansas State Committee, Miles Moore,

and there had been an effort to lynch him, prevented only by Governor Cobb, of Alabama, who was on the boat. Renewal of hostilities being threatened, I invited Moore on board the Cataract at Jefferson City, where we lay overnight. He and I barricaded ourselves in my stateroom, with our revolvers ready, but heard only occasional threats from outside; there was no actual assault. When we reached St. Louis, — after more than four days on board the steamboat, — and I finally discharged my revolver and put it away in my trunk, there occurred the most curious reaction from the feeling with which I had first loaded it. When it fully came home to me that all the tonic life of the last six weeks was ended, and that thenceforward, if any danger impended, the proper thing would be to look meekly about for a policeman, it seemed as if all the vigor had suddenly gone out of me, and a despicable effeminacy had set in. I could at that moment perfectly understand how Rob Roy, wishing to repay a debt he owed to the Edinburgh professor, offered to take his benefactor's son back into the Highlands "and make a man of him." In twenty-four hours, however, civilization reassumed its force, and Kansas appeared as far off as Culloden.

After returning home, I kept up for a long

time an active correspondence with some of the leading Kansas men, including Montgomery, Hinton, my old ally Martin Stowell, and my associate brigadier, Samuel F. Tappan, afterwards lieutenant-colonel of the First Colorado Cavalry. Some of these wrote and received letters under feigned names, because many of the post-offices in the Territory were in the hands of pro-slavery men who were suspected of tampering with correspondence. I also spoke on Kansas matters by request, before the legislatures of Massachusetts and Vermont, and was nominated by the Worcester Republicans for the state legislature on the issue of Kansas sympathy; but declined, feeling that I must at length recognize the claim of the Free Church on my attention. I was brought much in contact with that noble and self-devoted man, George Luther Stearns, of Medford, who gave, first and last, ten thousand dollars to maintain liberty in the new Territory; and also with Dr. Howe and Frank Sanborn, then the leading men in the Massachusetts Kansas Committee. In looking back on the inevitable confusion of that period, and the strange way in which men who had been heroic in danger grew demoralized in politics, I have often recalled as true the remark made by Sanborn, that it was difficult for a man to have much to do with the

affairs of Kansas, even at long range, without developing a crack in his brain.

It will doubtless seem to some readers a very natural transition to pass from this assertion to the later events which brought some of the above-named men into intimate relations with Captain John Brown. It has never been quite clear to me whether I saw him in Kansas or not; he was then in hiding, and I remember to have been taken somewhat covertly to a house in Lawrence, for an interview with a fugitive slave who was being sheltered by a white man; and though this man's name, which I have forgotten, was certainly not Brown, it may have been one of Brown's aliases. My first conscious acquaintance with that leader was nearly a year and a half later, when I received from him this communication, implying, as will be seen, that we had met before: —

ROCHESTER, N. Y. *2d Feb'y*, 1858.

MY DEAR SIR, — I am here *concealing my whereabouts* for good reasons (as I think) not however from any anxiety about my personal safety. I have been told that you are both a true *man:* and a true *abolitionist;* "and I partly believe," the whole story. Last fall I undertook to raise from $500 to $1000, for *secret service*, and succeeded in getting $500.

I now want to get for the *perfecting* of BY FAR the most *important* undertaking of my whole life; from $500 to $800 within the next sixty days. I have written Rev. Theodore Parker, George L. Stearns and F. B. Sanborn Esqrs. on the subject; but do not know as either Mr. Stearns or Mr. Sanborn are abolitionists. I suppose they are. Can you be induced to operate at Worcester and elsewhere during that time to raise from *anti*-slavery *men* and *women* (or any other parties) some part of that amount? I wish to keep it entirely still about where I am; and will be *greatly obliged* if you will consider this communication *strictly confidential:* unless it may be with such as you are *sure* will *feel and act and keep very still.* Please be so kind as to write N. Hawkins on the subject, Care of Wm. I. Watkins, Esqr. Rochester, N. Y. Should be most happy to meet you again; and talk matters more freely. Hope this is my last effort in the begging line.

Very Respectfully your Friend,

JOHN BROWN.

This name, "N. Hawkins," was Brown's favorite alias. The phrase "partly believe" was a bit of newspaper slang of that period, but came originally from Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (xi. 18) whence Brown may well

have taken it. I wrote in return, wishing for farther information, and asking if the "underground railroad" business was what he had in view. In a few days came this reply: —

ROCHESTER, N. Y. *12th Feb'y*, 1858.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have just read your kind letter of the 8th inst., and will now say that Rail Road business on a *somewhat extended* scale is the *identical* object for which I am trying to get means. I have been connected with that business as *commonly conducted* from my boyhood and *never* let an opportunity slip. I have been opperating to some purpose *the past season;* but I now have a measure on *foot* that I feel *sure* would awaken in you something more than a *common interest* if you could understand it. I have just written my friends G. L. Stearns and F. B. Sanborn asking them to meet me for consultation at Gerrit Smith's, Peterboro' [N. Y.]. I am very anxious to have *you come along; certain as I feel,* that you will never regret having been one of the council. I would most gladly pay your expenses had I the means to spare. *Will you come on?* Please write as before.

Your Friend JOHN BROWN.

As I could not go to Peterboro', he made an

appointment in Boston, and I met him in his room at the American House in March, 1858. I saw before me a man whose mere appearance and bearing refuted in advance some of the strange perversions which have found their way into many books, and which have often wholly missed the type to which he belonged. In his thin, worn, resolute face there were the signs of a fire which might wear him out, and practically did so, but nothing of pettiness or baseness; and his talk was calm, persuasive, and coherent. He was simply a high-minded, unselfish, belated Covenanter; a man whom Sir Walter Scott might have drawn, but whom such writers as Nicolay and Hay, for instance, have utterly failed to delineate. To describe him in their words as "clean but coarse" is curiously wide of the mark; he had no more of coarseness than was to be found in Habakkuk Mucklewrath or in George Eliot's Adam Bede; he had, on the contrary, that religious elevation which is itself a kind of refinement, — the quality one may see expressed in many a venerable Quaker face at yearly meeting. Coarseness absolutely repelled him; he was so strict as to the demeanor of his men that his band was always kept small, while that of Lane was large; he had little humor, and none of the humorist's temptation towards questionable con-

versation. Again, to call him "ambitious to irritation," in the words of the same authors, is equally wide of the mark. I saw him afterwards deeply disappointed and thwarted, and this long before his final failure, but never could find in him a trace of mere ambition; he lived, as he finally died, absolutely absorbed in one idea; and it is as a pure enthusiast — fanatic, if you please — that he is to be judged. His belief was that an all-seeing God had created the Alleghany Mountains from all eternity as the predestined refuge for a body of fugitive slaves. He had traversed those mountains in his youth, as a surveyor, and knew points which could be held by a hundred men against a thousand; he showed me rough charts of some of those localities and plans of connected mountain fortresses which he had devised.

Of grand tactics and strategy Brown knew as little as Garibaldi; but he had studied guerrilla warfare for himself in books, as well as in Europe, and had for a preceptor Hugh Forbes, an Englishman who had been a Garibaldian soldier. Brown's plan was simply to penetrate Virginia with a few comrades, to keep utterly clear of all attempt to create slave insurrection, but to get together bands and families of fugitive slaves, and then be guided by events. If he could establish them permanently in those

fastnesses, like the Maroons of Jamaica and Surinam, so much the better; if not, he would make a break from time to time, and take parties to Canada, by paths already familiar to him. All this he explained to me and others, plainly and calmly, and there was nothing in it that we considered either objectionable or impracticable; so that his friends in Boston — Theodore Parker, Howe, Stearns, Sanborn, and myself — were ready to coöperate in his plan as thus limited. Of the wider organization and membership afterwards formed by him in Canada we of course knew nothing, nor could we foresee the imprudence which finally perverted the attack into a defeat. We helped him in raising the money, and he seemed drawing toward the consummation of his plans, when letters began to come to his Massachusetts supporters from Hugh Forbes, already mentioned, threatening to make the whole matter public unless we could satisfy certain very unreasonable demands for money. On this point our committee was at once divided, not as to refusing the preposterous demands, but because the majority thought that this threat of disclosure made necessary an indefinite postponement of the whole affair; while Howe and myself, and Brown also, as it proved, thought otherwise.

He came again to Boston (May 31, 1858),

when I talked with him alone, and he held, as I had done, that Forbes could do him no real harm; that if people believed Forbes they would underrate his (Brown's) strength, which was just the thing he wished; or if they overrated it, "the increased terror would perhaps counterbalance this." If he had the means, he would not lose a day. But as I could not, unaided, provide the means, I was obliged to yield, as he did. He consented to postpone the enterprise and return to Kansas, carrying with him $500 in gold, and an order for certain arms at Tabor, which had belonged originally to the State Kansas Committee, but had since been transferred, in consideration of a debt, to our friend Stearns, who gave them to Brown on his own responsibility. Nearly a year now passed, during which I rarely heard from Brown, and thought that perhaps his whole project had been abandoned. A new effort to raise money was made at Boston in the spring of 1859, but I took little part in it. It had all begun to seem to me rather chimerical. The amount of $2000 was, nevertheless, raised for him at Boston, in June, 1859, and I find that Sanborn wrote to me (June 4), "Brown has set out on his expedition;" and then on October 6, "The $300 desired has been made up and received. Four or five men will be on the

ground next week from these regions and elsewhere." Brown's address was at this time at West Andover, Ohio, and the impression was that the foray would begin in that region, if at all. Nobody mentioned Harper's Ferry.

Ten days later the blow came. I went into a newspaper shop in Worcester one morning, and heard some one remark casually, "Old Osawatomie Brown has got himself into a tight place at last." I grasped eagerly at the morning paper, and read the whole story. Naturally, my first feeling was one of remorse, that the men who had given him money and arms should not actually have been by his side. In my own case, however, the justification was perfectly clear. Repeated postponements had taken the edge off from expectation, and the whole enterprise had grown rather vague and dubious in my mind. I certainly had not that degree of faith in it which would have led me to abandon all else, and wait nearly a year and a half for the opportunity of fulfillment; and indeed it became obvious at last that this longer postponement had somewhat disturbed the delicate balance of the zealot's mind, and had made him, at the very outset, defy the whole power of the United States government, and that within easy reach of Washington. Nothing of this kind was included in his original plans.

At any rate, since we were not with him, the first question was what part we were now to take. It will be remembered that the explosion of the Brown affair caused at once a vast amount of inquiry at Washington, and many were the threats of prosecuting Brown's previous friends and supporters. There was some talk of flight to Canada, and one or two of these persons actually went thither or to Europe. It always seemed to me undesirable to do this ; it rather looked as if, having befriended Brown's plans so far as we understood them, it was our duty to stand our ground and give him our moral support, at least on the witness-stand. This view was perhaps easier for me to take, as my name was only incidentally mentioned in the newspapers ; and it is only within a few months that I have discovered that it had been early brought, with that of Sanborn, to the express attention of Governor Wise, of Virginia. Among his papers captured at Richmond by Major James Savage, of the Second Massachusetts Infantry, was this anonymous letter, received by the Virginia governor, and indorsed by him for transmission to some one else, probably in Congress, — but perhaps never forwarded. It read as follows: "There are two persons in Massachusetts, and I think only two, who, if summoned as witnesses, can ex-

plain the whole of Brown's plot. Their names are Francis B. Sanborn, of Concord, and T. W. Higginson, of Worcester, Mass. No time should be lost, as they may abscond, but I do not think they will, as they think you would not think it best to send for them. A Friend of Order." This was indorsed "A Friend to Gov. Wise, Oct., 1859. Call attention to this." And just below, "Sent to me, now sent to you for what it is worth. Richmond, Oct. 29, H. A. W. [Henry A. Wise.] A. Huntin [presumably the name of a secretary]."

This communication was written during the trial of Captain Brown, and a few days before his sentence, which was pronounced on November 2. It is hard to say whether it had any direct bearing on the arrest of Sanborn at Concord in the following April. It is very probable that it had, and if so, his arrest, had it been sustained by the court, might have been followed by mine; but it would have been quite superfluous, for I should at any time have been ready to go if summoned, and should, in fact, have thought it rather due to the memory of Brown. I could at least have made it plain that anything like slave insurrection, in the ordinary sense of the word, was remote from his thoughts, and that his plan was wholly different. He would have limited himself to advising a

fugitive slave, if intercepted, to shoot down any one who attempted to arrest him; and this advice would have been given by every Abolitionist, unless a non-resistant.

There was, of course, an immediate impulse to rescue Brown from prison. I do not know how far this extended, and can only vouch for myself. The primary obstacle to it was that one of Brown's first acts, on meeting a Northern friend in his prison, had been positively to prohibit any such attempt; the message being sent North by Judge Thomas Russell, from whom I received it at the railway station on his arrival. This barred the way effectually, for after Brown had taken that position he would have adhered to it. It occurred to me, however, that his wife's presence would move him, if anything could, and that she might also be a valuable medium of communication, should he finally yield to the wishes of his friends. For this purpose I went to North Elba, New York, the mountain home of the Browns, to fetch her, and wrote, after that memorable trip, a full account of it, which was prefixed to Redpath's "Life of Brown." Upon entering for the first time the superb scenery of the Adirondacks, I saw myself in a region which was a fit setting for the heroic family to be visited. I found them poor, abstemious, patient, unflinching.

They felt that the men of their household had given their lives for freedom, and there was no weak regret, no wish to hold them back. In the family was Annie Brown, who had been with the conspirators in Virginia, and had kept house and cooked for them. There were also the widows of the two slain sons, young girls of sixteen and twenty, one of them having also lost two brothers at Harper's Ferry. It illustrates the frugal way in which the Browns had lived that the younger of these two widows was not regarded by the household as being absolutely destitute, because her husband had left her five sheep, valued at two dollars apiece.

On my return, Mrs. Brown the elder rode with me for a whole day on a buckboard to Keeseville, and I had much talk with her. I have never in my life been in contact with a nature more dignified and noble; a Roman matron touched with the finer element of Christianity. She told me that this plan had occupied her husband's thoughts and prayers for twenty years; that he always believed himself an instrument in the hands of Providence, and she believed it too. She had always prayed that he might be killed in fight rather than fall into the hands of slaveholders, but she "could not regret it now, in view of the noble words of freedom which it had been his privilege to

utter." She also said, "I have had thirteen children, and only four are left; but if I am to see the ruin of my house, I cannot but hope that Providence may bring out of it some benefit for the poor slaves." She little foresaw how, within two years, her dead husband's name would ring through the defiles of the Virginia mountains in the songs of the Union soldiers. When, the next day, I had to put into her hands, in the railway-car, the newspaper containing his death-warrant, she bent her head for a few moments on the back of the seat before us, and then lifted it again unchanged. Her errand was absolutely in vain, Brown refusing even to see her, possibly distrusting his own firmness, or wishing to put it above all possibility of peril; and she returned to her mountain home.

Meanwhile, one of the few of his band who had escaped had come to my door one day in Worcester. When he reached my house, he appeared utterly demented after the danger and privations of his flight through the mountains. He could not speak two coherent sentences, and I was grateful when, after twenty-four hours, I could send him to his friends in Boston. Another and far abler refugee from Harper's Ferry was Charles Plummer Tidd, one of our Worcester emigrants, — afterwards well known as Sergeant Charles Plummer of

the Twenty-First Massachusetts, — who told me, in an interview on February 10, 1860, of which I still preserve the written record, "All the boys opposed Harper's Ferry, the younger Browns most of all. In September it nearly broke up the camp. He himself [Tidd] left, almost quarreling with Brown. Finally, when they consented, it was with the agreement that men should be sent in each direction to burn bridges;" which was not done, however. Tidd pronounced the Harper's Ferry attack "the only mistake Brown ever made," and attributed it, as it is now generally assigned, to a final loss of mental balance from overbrooding on one idea. Brown's general project he still heartily indorsed; saying that the Virginia mountains were "the best guerrilla country in the world," — all crags and dense laurel thickets; that "twenty-five men there could paralyze the whole business of the South," and that "nobody could take them." The negroes, he said, had proved ready enough to follow Brown, but naturally slipped back to their masters when they saw that the enterprise was to fail.

The same question of a rescue presented itself, after Captain Brown's execution, in regard to the two members of his party whose trial and conviction took place two months later, — Stevens and Hazlett, the former of whom I had

met with Lane's party in Kansas. In February, 1860, after urgent appeals from Mrs. Rebecca Spring, of New York, who had visited these men, I made up my mind to use for their relief a portion of certain funds placed in my hands for the benefit of the Brown family; first, of course, consulting Mrs. Brown, who fully approved. Thayer and Eldridge, two young publishers in Boston, also took an interest in raising funds for this purpose; and the fact is fixed in my memory by the circumstance that, on visiting their shop one day, during the negotiations, I met for the first and only time Walt Whitman. He was there to consult them about the publication of his poems, and I saw before me, sitting on the counter, a handsome, burly man, heavily built, and not looking, to my gymnasium-trained eye, in really good condition for athletic work. I perhaps felt a little prejudiced against him from having read his "Leaves of Grass" on a voyage, in the early stages of seasickness, — a fact which doubtless increased for me the intrinsic unsavoriness of certain passages. But the personal impression made on me by the poet was not so much of manliness as of Boweriness, if I may coin the phrase; indeed rather suggesting Sidney Lanier's subsequent vigorous phrase, "a dandy roustabout." This passing impres-

sion did not hinder me from thinking of Whitman with hope and satisfaction at a later day when regiments were to be raised for the war, when the Bowery seemed the very place to enlist them, and even "Billy Wilson's Zouaves" were hailed with delight. When, however, after waiting a year or more, Whitman decided that the proper post for him was hospital service, I confess to feeling a reaction, which was rather increased than diminished by his profuse celebration of his own labors in that direction. Hospital attendance is a fine thing, no doubt, yet if all men, South and North, had taken the same view of their duty that Whitman held, there would have been no occasion for hospitals on either side.

The only persons beside myself who were intimately acquainted with the project formed for rescuing Stevens and Hazlett were Richard H. Hinton, already mentioned, and John W. LeBarnes, afterwards lieutenant of a German company in the Second Massachusetts Infantry during the Civil War. It was decided that an attempt at rescue could best be made from a rendezvous at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and that Hinton should go to Kansas, supplied with money by LeBarnes and myself, to get the cooperation of Captain James Montgomery and eight or ten tried and trusty men. I was to

meet these men at Harrisburg, while LeBarnes was to secure a reinforcement of German-Americans, among whom he had much influence, from New York. Only one man in Harrisburg, an active Abolitionist, knew of our purpose, and I met Montgomery at this man's house, after taking up my own residence, on February 17, 1860, at the United States Hotel, under the name of Charles P. Carter. I had met the guerrilla leader once before in Kansas, and we now consulted about the expedition, which presented no ordinary obstacles.

The enterprise would involve traversing fifty miles of mountain country by night, at the rate of about ten miles each night, carrying arms, ammunition, blankets, and a week's rations, with the frequent necessity of camping without fire in February, and with the certainty of detection in case of snow. It would include crossing the Potomac, possibly at a point where there was neither a bridge nor a ford. It would culminate in an attack on a building with a wall fourteen feet high, with two sentinels outside and twenty-five inside ; with a certainty of raising the town in the process, and then, if successful, with the need of retreating, perhaps with wounded men and probably by daylight. These were the difficulties that Montgomery, as our leader, had to face ; and although, in

Kansas, he had taken Fort Scott with twenty-two men against sixty-eight, yet this was quite a different affair. For myself, I had at that time such confidence in his guidance that the words of the Scotch ballad often rang in my ears : —

> "I could ha'e ridden the border through
> Had Christie Graeme been at my back."

Lithe, quick, low-voiced, reticent, keen, he seemed the ideal of a partisan leader, and was, indeed, a curious compound of the moss-trooper and the detective. Among his men were Carpenter, Pike, Seamans, Rice, Gardner, Willis, and Silas Soule, — all well known in Kansas. The last three of these men had lately been among the rescuers of Dr. Doy from jail at St. Joseph, Missouri, — a town of eleven thousand inhabitants, — under circumstances of peculiar daring ; one of them personating a horse-thief and two others the officers who had arrested him, and thus getting admission to the jail.

The first need was to make exploration of the localities, and, taking with him one of his companions, — a man, as it proved, of great resources, — Montgomery set out by night and was gone several days. While he examined the whole region, — his native Kentucky accent saving him from all suspicion, — his comrade penetrated into the very jail, in the guise of a jovial, half-drunken Irishman, and got speech

with the prisoners, who were thus notified of the proposed rescue. They expressed great distrust of it, and this partly because, even if successful, it would endanger the life of the jailer, Avis, who had won their gratitude, as well as Brown's, by his great kindness. I have never known whether this opposition had any covert influence on the mind of Montgomery, but I know that he came back at last, and quenched all our hopes by deciding that a severe snowstorm which had just occurred rendered the enterprise absolutely hopeless. I was not at the time quite satisfied with this opinion, but it was impossible to overrule our leader ; and on visiting that region and the jail itself, many years later, I was forced to believe him wholly right. At any rate, it was decided by vote of the party to abandon the expedition, and the men were sent back to Kansas, their arms being forwarded to Worcester, while I went to Antioch, Ohio, to give a promised lecture to the college students, and then returned home. I now recognize how almost hopeless the whole enterprise had appeared in my own mind : the first entry in my notebook, after returning (March 1, 1860), is headed with the words of that celebrated message in the First Book of Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities," — "Recalled to Life."

## VIII

### CIVIL WAR

"Black faces in the camp
Where moved those peerless brows and eyes of old."
BROWNING'S *Luria.*

FROM the time of my Kansas visit I never had doubted that a farther conflict of some sort was impending. The absolute and increasing difference between the two sections of the nation had been most deeply impressed upon me by my first and only visit to a slave-mart. On one of my trips to St. Louis I had sought John Lynch's slave-dealing establishment, following an advertisement in a newspaper, and had found a yard full of men and women strolling listlessly about and waiting to be sold. The proprietor, looking like a slovenly horse-dealer, readily explained to me their condition and value. Presently a planter came in, having been sent on an errand to buy a little girl to wait on his wife; stating this as easily and naturally as if he had been sent for a skein of yarn. Mr. Lynch called in three sisters, the oldest perhaps eleven or twelve, — nice little

mulatto girls in neat pink calico frocks suggesting a careful mother. Some question being asked, Mr. Lynch responded cheerfully, "Strip her and examine for yourself. I never have any secrets from my customers." This ceremony being waived, the eldest was chosen; and the planter, patting her on the head kindly enough, asked, "Don't you want to go with me?" when the child, bursting into a flood of tears, said, "I want to stay with my mother." Mr. Lynch's face ceased to be good-natured when he ordered the children to go out, but the bargain was finally completed. It was an epitome of slavery; the perfectly matter-of-fact character of the transaction, and the circumstance that those before me did not seem exceptionally cruel men, made the whole thing more terrible. I was beholding a case, not of special outrage, but of every-day business, which was worse. If these were the commonplaces of the institution, what must its exceptional tragedies be?

With such an experience in my mind, and the fact everywhere visible in Kansas of the armed antagonism of the Free State and pro-slavery parties, I readily shared the feeling — then more widely spread than we can now easily recall — of the possible necessity of accepting the disunion forced upon us by the

apparently triumphant career of the slave power. It was a period when Banks had said, in a speech in Maine, that it might be needful, in a certain contingency, "to let the Union slide;" and when Whittier had written in the original form of his poem on Texas, —

> "Make our Union-bond a chain,
> We will snap its links in twain,
> We will stand erect again!"

These men were not Garrisonians or theoretical disunionists, but the pressure of events seemed, for the moment, to be driving us all in their direction.

I find that at the jubilant twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (January 2, 1857) I said, in Faneuil Hall, "To-morrow may call us to some work so stern that the joys of this evening will seem years away. To-morrow may make this evening only the revelry by night before Waterloo." Under this conviction I took an active part with the late Francis W. Bird and a few other Republicans and some Garrisonian Abolitionists in calling a state disunion convention at Worcester on January 15, 1857; but the Republican party was by no means ready for a movement so extreme, though some of its leaders admitted frankly that it was well for the North to suggest that freedom was

more valuable than even the Union. The Kansas question, it must be remembered, was yet impending, and it was obviously possible that it might result in another Slave State, leading the way to others still. Moreover, passports were now for the first time refused to free colored men, under the Taney decision, on the ground of their not being citizens of the nation. It was also understood that, under this decision, slaveholders would be protected by the Supreme Court in carrying their slaves with them into Free States and holding them there. Such things accounted for the temporary development of a Northern disunion feeling about that time; and a national convention at Cleveland, following the state convention, had been fully planned by a committee of which I was chairman, — the call for this receiving the names of more than six thousand signers, representing all of the Free States, — when there came the formidable financial panic which made the year 1857 so memorable. As this calamity had begun in Ohio, and was felt most severely there, it was decided that the convention should be postponed, and this, as it proved, forever.

In the following year Senator Seward made his great speech in which he accepted fully the attitude, which was the basis of our position, that the whole anti-slavery contest was a thing

inevitable, — "an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces," — and that the United States must and would "sooner or later become entirely a slave-holding nation or entirely a free labor nation." Either, Seward said, the plantations of the South must ultimately be tilled by free men, or the farms of Massachusetts and New York must be surrendered to the rearing of slaves; there could be no middle ground. Lincoln had said, in the controversy with Douglas, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." In view of these suggestions, some of us were for accepting the situation, after our fashion, and found ourselves imitating that first mate of a vessel, who, seeing her to be in danger, and being bidden by his captain to go forward and attend to his own part of the ship, came aft again presently, touched his cap, and said, "Captain ——, my part of the ship is at anchor." It was doubtless well that the march of events proved too strong for us, and that the union feeling itself was finally aroused to do a work which the anti-slavery purpose alone could not have accomplished; yet we acted at the time according to our light, and we know from the testimony of Lincoln himself that it was the New England Abolitionists from whom he learned that love of liberty which at last made him turn the scale.

Then came the John Brown affair, as described in a previous chapter; and there followed after this, in the winter of 1860, a curious outbreak in New England itself of the old proscriptive feeling. There ensued an interval when the Boston Abolitionists were again called upon to combine, in order to prevent public meetings from being broken up and the house of Wendell Phillips from being mobbed. Phillips was speaking at that time on Sundays at the Boston Music Hall, and it was necessary to protect the assembly by getting men to act together, under orders, and guard the various approaches to the hall. I was placed at the head of a company formed for this purpose, and it was strange to find how little advance had been made beyond the old perplexity in organizing reformers. There was more willingness to arm than formerly, but that was all. Mr. George W. Smalley has lately given a graphic description of that period, and has described those lovers of freedom as being "well organized;" but he was not wholly in a position to judge, because he and another young man — the John W. LeBarnes already mentioned in connection with the abortive Virginia foray — had chivalrously constituted themselves the body-guard of Wendell Phillips, and were at his side day and night, thus being

in a manner on special service. Their part of the work being so well done, they may naturally have supposed the rest to be in an equally satisfactory condition; but as a matter of fact the so-called organization was only the flimsiest shell. It consisted, while nominally under my command, of some forty men, half of these being Germans, half Americans: the Germans were inconveniently full of fight, and the Americans hardly awakened to the possibility of it. After going through the form of posting my men at the numerous doors of the Music Hall, each as it were on picket duty, I almost always found, on visiting them half an hour later, that the Americans had taken comfortable seats inside and were applauding the speakers, as if that were their main duty; while the Germans had perhaps got into some high discussion in the corridors, ending in an exhibition of pistols and in being carried off by the police. Expostulating once with one of my nominal lieutenants, an American, I referred to a certain order as having been disregarded. "Oh," he said calmly, "that was an order, was it? I had viewed it in the light of a suggestion." Inasmuch as one or two public meetings had been broken up by gentlemen of property and standing, who at least obeyed the directions of the bully who led them, this attitude of the

defenders seemed discouraging. It was too much like that croquet party in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," where the game was disturbed by the fact that the attendants who were expected to stoop down and officiate as wickets kept constantly straightening themselves up and walking away.

I spent one night on guard at Phillips's house with his young henchmen, and was struck, then as before, with his high-bred bearing. Always aristocratic in aspect, he was never more so than when walking through the streets of his own Boston with a howling mob about him. It was hard to make him adopt ordinary precautions; he did not care to have the police protect his house, and he would have gone to the scaffold if necessary, I firmly believe, like the typical French marquis in the Reign of Terror, who took a pinch of snuff from his snuff-box while looking on the crowd. This was never more conspicuously the case than at the annual convention of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, just after a meeting on the anniversary of John Brown's execution had been broken up by a mob of very much the same social grade with that which had formerly mobbed Garrison. I did not happen to be present at the John Brown gathering, being in Worcester; but at the larger convention

(January 24, 1861), held at Tremont Temple, I was again in service with the same body of followers already described to defend the meeting and the speakers, if needful. The body of the hall was solidly filled with grave Abolitionists and knitting women, but round the doors and galleries there was a noisy crowd of young fellows, mostly well dressed and many of them well educated, who contrived, by shouting and by singing uproarious songs, to drown the voices of the speakers, and to compel Phillips himself to edge in his sentences when the singers were out of breath. The favorite burden was, —

"Tell John Andrew,
Tell John Andrew,
Tell John Andrew
John Brown 's dead;"

with more ribald verses following. It was not many months before those who took part in the meeting and those who tried to suppress it were marching southward in uniform, elbow to elbow, singing a very different John Brown song.

There was one moment during this session when it seemed as if an actual hand-to-hand conflict had come. There was a sudden movement at the doors, and a body of men came pressing toward the platform, along each of the aisles; and I know that I, for one, had my

hand on my revolver, when the invaders proved to be Mayor Wightman with aldermen and police, on an apparently peaceful mission. He turned and announced, however, that he came to dissolve the meeting by request of the trustees of the building. This being promptly denied by the trustees, who were present, and who compelled him to read their letter, it was shown that he had been requested to come and protect the assembly instead, — and this, with curious changeableness, he proceeded to attempt; at least securing partial order, and stopping the mob from throwing down cushions and furniture from the galleries, which it had already begun to do. The speakers at this session were Phillips, Emerson, Clarke, and myself, and it was on this occasion that Phillips uttered a remark which became historic. Turning from the mob, which made him inaudible, he addressed himself wholly to the reporters, and said: "When I speak to these pencils, I speak to a million of men. . . . My voice is beaten by theirs [those of the mob], but they cannot beat types. All honor to Faust, for he made mobs impossible." At last the mayor promised the chairman, Edmund Quincy, to protect the evening session with fifty policemen; but instead of this he finally prohibited it, and when I came, expecting to attend it, I

found the doors closed by police, while numerous assailants, under their leader, Jonas H. French, were in possession of the outer halls. A portion of these, bent on mischief, soon set off in search of it among the quarters of the negroes near Charles Street, and I followed, wishing to stand by my friends in that way, if it could be done in no other. Lewis Hayden afterwards said that I should not have done this, for the negroes were armed, and would have shot from their houses if molested. But there was only shouting and groaning on the part of the mob, with an occasional breaking of windows; the party attacked kept indoors, and I went home undisturbed.

All these things looked like a coming storm. It was observable that men were beginning to use firearms more, about that time, even in New England. I find that in those days I read military books; took notes on fortifications, strategy, and the principles of attack and defense. Yet all these preliminary events were detached and disconnected; their disturbances were only like the little local whirlwinds that sometimes precede a tornado. There was a lull; and then, on the day when Fort Sumter was fired upon, the storm burst and the whole community awaked. One of the first things thought of by all was the unprotected condition

of Washington. It seemed to me that there was one simple measure to be undertaken for its defense, in case of danger; so I went, on the very day when the news reached us, to several leading men in Worcester, who gave me a letter of recommendation to Governor Andrew, that I might ask him to appropriate a sum from his contingent fund, and to let me again summon Montgomery and his men from Kansas; going with them into the mountains of Virginia, there to kindle a back fire of alarm and draw any rebel force away from Washington. Governor Andrew approved the project, but had no contingent fund; Dr. S. G. Howe entered warmly into it, and took me on State Street to raise money, as did Mr. S. G. Ward, afterwards, on Wall Street in New York. One or two thousand dollars were pledged, and I went to Harrisburg to see Governor Curtin, of Pennsylvania. He said that he would give a thousand dollars if John Brown could be brought back to life, and had my plan under consideration, when the rapid progress of events strengthened the government enough to make any such irregular proceeding quite undesirable.

Coming back to Worcester, I was offered the majorship of the Fourth Battalion of Infantry, then hastily called into the United States service; and when I declined this, the position

was offered to my old schoolmate, Charles Devens, who, though almost wholly ignorant of military drill, accepted it on condition that our best local drill-master, Captain Goodhue, should go with him as adjutant. My reasons for not accepting were various: first, that I doubted my competency; secondly, that my wife, always an invalid, was just at that time especially dependent on me; and lastly, that it was then wholly uncertain whether the government would take the anti-slavery attitude, without which a military commission would have been for me intolerable, since I might have been ordered to deliver up fugitive slaves to their masters, — as had already happened to several officers. I have often thought what a difference it might have made in both Devens's life and mine if I had accepted this early opportunity. I might have come out a major-general, as he did; but I dare say that the government gained by the exchange a better soldier than it lost. Meanwhile I went on drilling and taking fencing lessons; and a few months later, when the anti-slavery position of the government became clearer, I obtained authority from Governor Andrew to raise a regiment, and had about half the necessary ten companies provided for, in different parts of the State, when one of the sudden stoppages of recruiting occurred, and

the whole affair proved abortive. It was understood with Governor Andrew that while I was to raise the regiment, I was to be only second in command, the colonel being Captain Rufus Saxton, U. S. A., an officer with whom, by a curious coincidence, I was later to have the most intimate connection. I had been engaged upon this organization between October, 1861, and February, 1862, and the renewed disappointment was very hard to bear. In several of my printed essays, especially at the end of that called "A Letter to a Young Contributor," I find traces of this keen regret; and when finally a new nine months' regiment, the Fifty-First Massachusetts, was called out, in August, my wife being in somewhat better health, I could keep out of the affair no longer, but opened a recruiting office in Worcester. Being already well known among the young men there, through the athletic clubs and drill clubs, I had little difficulty in getting much more than the required number, giving a strong nucleus for a second company, which was transferred to the command of my friend John S. Baldwin, now of the "Worcester Spy."

It is almost impossible here to reproduce the emotions of that period of early war enlistments. As I ventured to say in the preface to "Harvard Memorial Biographies," "To call it a

sense of novelty was nothing; it was as if one had learned to swim in air, and were striking out for some new planet." All the methods, standards, habits, and aims of ordinary life were reversed, and the intrinsic and traditional charm of the soldier's life was mingled in my own case with the firm faith that the death-knell of slavery itself was being sounded. Meanwhile, the arts of drill and the discipline were to be learned in practice, and the former proved incomparably easier than had been expected; it turned out that there was no department of science in which the elements were so readily acquired. As to the exercise of authority, however, it was different. It was no longer possible to view a command only "in the light of a suggestion." Moreover, we were dealing with a democratic society, on which a new temporary aristocracy of military rank was to be built, superseding all previous distinction; and the task was not light. Fortunately, I was older than many raw officers, — being thirty-eight, — and had some very young men in my company, who had been confided to me by their parents as to a father. Within my own immediate command I had hardly a trace of trouble; nor did I find the least difficulty in deferring to the general in command of the camp, who was by occupation a working mechanic, and

uneducated except in war. But the trouble was that he was on duty only by day, returning to his home every night, during which period the regiment became a heterogeneous mass of men, as yet little trained either to command or to obey. Discipline was not easy, especially in the case of some newly arrived company, perhaps in a high state of whiskey; and we had to learn to bear and forbear. I know that in the effort to enforce order I fell rapidly out of popularity, usually for my merits; and then inexplicably fell into it again, sometimes through acts of negligence. But nobody denied that my own company was at least in good condition, and from the moment we had a permanent colonel, and an admirable one, — afterwards General A. B. R. Sprague, since mayor of Worcester, — all went as it should. I was only a month with the regiment, but the experience was simply invaluable. Every man is placed at the greatest disadvantage in a higher military command, unless he has previously sown his wild oats, as it were, in a lower; making his mistakes, suffering for them, and learning how to approach his duty rightly.

There came into vogue about that time a "nonsense verse," so called, bearing upon my humble self, and vivacious enough to be widely quoted in the newspapers. It was composed, I

believe, by Mrs. Sivret, of Boston, and ran as follows : —

> "There was a young curate of Worcester
> Who could have a command if he 'd choose ter,
> But he said each recruit
> Must be blacker than soot,
> Or else he 'd go preach where he used ter."

As a matter of fact it came no nearer the truth than the famous definition of a crab by Cuvier's pupil, since I had never been a curate, had already left the pulpit for literature before the war, and was so far from stipulating for a colored regiment that I had just been commissioned in a white one; nevertheless the hit was palpable, and deserved its popularity. I had formed even in a short time a strong attachment to my own company, regiment, and regimental commander, — and one day, when the governor of Rhode Island had made his first abortive suggestion of a black regiment, I had notified my young lieutenants, John Goodell and Luther Bigelow, that such an enterprise would be the only thing likely to take me from them. A few days after, as we sat at dinner in the Worcester barracks, I opened a letter from Brigadier-General Rufus Saxton, military commander of the Department of the South, saying that he had at last received authority to recruit a regiment of freed slaves, and wished me to be its colonel. It was an offer that took

my breath away, and fulfilled the dream of a lifetime. This was long before Massachusetts took steps in the same direction; Kansas was, however, enlisting a regiment of free negroes, and three similar regiments, formed by the Confederates in Louisiana, had been turned into Union troops by General Butler; but the first regiment of emancipated slaves as such had yet to be mustered in. There remained but one doubt: would it really be a regiment, or a mere plantation guard in uniform? This doubt could be determined only on the spot; so I got a furlough, went to South Carolina to inspect the situation, and saw promptly that General Saxton was in earnest, and that I could safely leave all and follow him.

The whole condition of affairs at what was to be for me the seat of war was then most peculiar. General Saxton, who had been an Abolitionist even at West Point, was discharging the semi-civil function of military governor. Freed slaves by thousands, men, women, and children, had been collected on the Sea Islands of South Carolina, and were being rationed, employed, and taught under the direction of missionaries, agents, and teachers from the North; these being sometimes admirable, but sometimes incompetent, tyrannical, or fanatical. Between these and the troops there existed a constant

jealousy, and General Saxton, in a position requiring superhuman patience and tact, was obliged to mediate between the two parties. Major-General Hunter, at the head of the department, had been the very first to arm the blacks (in May, 1862), and had adhered, after his fashion, to that policy, — my regiment being a revival of that early experiment; but some of his staff were bitterly opposed to any such enlistment, and thwarted him as soon as his back was turned, — a thing not difficult, as he was indolent, forgetful, changeable, and easily accessible to flattery. While, therefore, my regiment had a nominal support, it was constantly hindered: there were difficulties as to uniforms, medicines, and guns; it was often necessary to struggle to obtain more than a Cinderella's portion. This had the farther disadvantage that it tempted us, perhaps, to be sometimes needlessly suspicious; nor was our beloved General Saxton always free from oversensitiveness. Incidentally, also, we found that in all connection with the regular army we must come in for our share of its internal feuds; and we discovered that old West Point grudges were sometimes being wreaked on our unoffending heads, General Saxton's enemies occasionally striking at him through us. He, on the other hand, distrusted the intentions of

certain officers in regard to us, feared lest we should be sacrificed under any orders but his, and sometimes held us back from service when he might better have risked us. All these drawbacks were trifles, however, beside the pleasure of being fairly in military harness, and of bringing into the public service the warlike material which most persons regarded with doubt.

There was also a happiness in dealing with an eminently trustful and affectionate race, and seeing the tonic effect of camp discipline upon the blacks. In this respect there was an obvious difference between them and the whites. Few white soldiers enjoyed serving in the ranks, for itself; they accepted it for the sake of their country, or because others did, or from the hope of promotion, but there was nevertheless a secret feeling in most minds that it was a step down; no person of democratic rearing really enjoys being under the orders of those who have hitherto been his equals. The negroes, on the other hand, who had been ordered about all their lives, felt it a step upward to be in uniform, to have rights as well as duties; their ready imitativeness and love of rhythm made the drill and manual exercises easy for them; and they rejoiced in the dignity of guard and outpost duty, which they did to perfection. It is, however, a great mistake to

suppose that slavery, as such, was altogether a good preparation for military life; and the officers who copied the methods of plantation overseers proved failures. It was necessary to keep constantly before the men that they were much more than slaves, to appeal to their pride as soldiers, to win their affection also, and then to exercise absolute justice; and the officer who did all this could wind them round his finger. Through such influences it was needful to teach them, among other things, to obey the non-commissioned officers of their own color, and this they at first found hard. "I don't want him to play de white man ober me," was a frequent remark in such cases, and the objection had to be patiently met by explaining that color had nothing to do with it; that they obeyed their sergeants only as those sergeants obeyed their captains, or the captains yielded to me, or I took my orders from the general. In a little while this became perfectly clear to their minds, and they were proud, not offended, when sent on some expedition under a sergeant of their own race. This was made easier by the fact that we had among the non-commissioned officers much admirable material; and the color-sergeant, Prince Rivers, was not only a man of distinguished appearance, but superior in the power of command to half of the white

officers in the regiment. He had previously been the most conspicuous private coachman in Charleston; there had been a reward of one thousand dollars offered for him when he escaped from slavery; and once, when visiting New York as General Hunter's orderly, he had been mobbed in the street for wearing the United States uniform, and had defended himself successfully against half a dozen men, taking his position in a doorway. After the war he was appointed a justice of the peace in South Carolina.

It was a fortunate thing for both General Saxton and myself that each of us had been satisfied in advance of the essential courage of the blacks. In my case this was the result of a little experience, previously related, at the Burns riot, — when a negro stepped into the Court-House door before me; in Saxton's case it came from his participation in the war between the United States troops and the Florida Seminoles, when he had observed, having both blacks and Indians to fight against, that the negroes would often stand fire when the Indians would run away. We were thus saved from all solicitude such as beset for a time the mind of that young hero, Colonel Robert Shaw, when he took the field, six months later, with his Massachusetts colored regiment. When I

rode over to his camp to welcome him, on his first arrival, he said that while I had shown that negro troops were effective in bush-fighting, it had yet to be determined how they would fight in line of battle; and I expressing no doubt on this point, he suggested that it would always be possible to put another line of soldiers behind a black regiment, so as to present equal danger in either direction. I was amazed, for I never should have dreamed of being tempted to such a step; and he learned a lesson of more confidence when his men followed him upon the parapets of Fort Wagner, after a white regiment, in a previous assault, had lain down and refused to face the terrific fire from that almost impregnable fort.

The colored soldiers caused me, and I think caused their officers generally, no disappointment whatever in respect to courage or conduct. As General Saxton wrote to a Northern committee of inquiry as to the freed blacks, they were "intensely human." They were certainly more docile than white soldiers, more affectionate, and more impulsive; they probably varied more under different officers and were less individually self-reliant, but were, on the other hand, under good guidance, more eager and impetuous than whites. They had also, in the case of my regiment, a valuable

knowledge of the country. They were very gregarious, and liked to march together even on a fatigue party, singing as they marched, whereas white soldiers on such service were commonly to be seen tramping along singly. In regard to courage, there was not, I suspect, much difference. Most men have the ordinary share of that attribute; comparatively few are adventurous; the commander of any regiment, white or black, soon knew perfectly well just which of his men would be likely to volunteer for a forlorn hope. Whether the better education and social position of white soldiers brought them more under the influence of what Sir Philip Sidney calls "the great appetites of honor" I cannot say; this being, it will be remembered, Sidney's reason for expecting more courage from officers than from enlisted men. It is quite certain, on the other hand, that any want of such qualities was more than balanced by the fact that the black soldiers were fighting for their freedom and that of their families, this being the most potent of all motives. They used often to point out, in conversation, that they had really far more at stake than their officers had, since, if the Confederates conquered, or even if it were a drawn game, the negroes would all relapse into slavery, while their white officers would go back

to the North and live much as before. This solicitude was at the foundation of all their enthusiasm; and besides this there was their religious feeling, which was genuine and ardent, making them almost fatalists in action, and giving their very amusements that half-pious, half-dramatic character which filled the camp every evening with those stirring songs that I was perhaps the first person to put in print, and that have reached so many hearts when sung by the Hampton singers and others. Riding towards the camp, just after dark, I could hear, when within a half-mile or thereabouts, the chorus of the song and the rhythmical clapping of hands; and as I drew nearer, the gleam of the camp-fires on the dusky faces made the whole scene look more like an encampment of Bedouin Arabs than like anything on the Atlantic shores.

Before I had joined the regiment, detachments of recruits had been sent down the coast of South Carolina and Georgia to destroy salt-works and bring away lumber; and after it had grown to fuller size, there occurred several expeditions into the interior, under my command, with or without naval escort. We went by ourselves up the St. Mary's River, where the men were for the first time actively under fire, and acquitted themselves well. The river

itself was regarded by naval officers as the most dangerous in that region, from its great rapidity, its sudden turns, and the opportunity of attack given by the projecting bluffs. To this day I have never understood why our return was not cut off by the enemy's felling trees, which could have been done easily at several points. We were on a "double-ender,"—a steamer built for a ferry-boat, and afterwards protected by iron plates. There was often no way of passing a sharp curve, in descending, except by running one end ashore and letting the swift current swing the other extremity round, after which we steamed downwards, the engine being reversed, till the process was repeated. At these points the enemy always mustered in numbers, and sometimes tried to board the vessel, besides pouring volleys on our men, who at such times were kept below, only shooting from the windows. The captain of my boat was shot and killed, and I shall never forget the strange sensation when I drew his lifeless form into the pilot-house which he had rashly quitted. It was the first dead body I had ever handled and carried in my arms, and the sudden change from full and vigorous life made an impression that no later experience surpassed.

A more important enterprise was the recap-

ture of Jacksonville, Florida, which had been held by the Union troops, and then deserted; it was the only position that had been held on the mainland in the Department of the South, and was reoccupied (March, 1863) by two black regiments under my command, with the aid of a naval gunboat under Captain (afterwards Admiral) Charles Steedman, U. S. N. We took a large supply of uniforms, equipments, and extra rations, with orders, when once Jacksonville was secured, to hand it over to white troops that were to be sent under Colonel John D. Rust; we meanwhile pressing on up the river to Magnolia, where there were large unoccupied buildings. These we were to employ as barracks, and as a basis for recruiting stations yet farther inland. It was of this expedition that President Lincoln wrote to General Hunter (April 1, 1863): "I am glad to see the account of your colored force at Jacksonville. I see the enemy are driving at them fiercely, as is to be expected. It is important to the enemy that such a force shall not take shape and grow and thrive in the South, and in precisely the same proportion it is important to us that it shall." Our part was faithfully carried through, and no disaster occurred, though I had to defend the town with a force so small that every resource had to be taxed to mislead

the enemy into thinking us far more numerous than we were; this so far succeeding that General Finnegan — afterwards the victor at Olustee — quadrupled our real numbers in his reports. We fortified the approaches to the town, drove back the enemy's outposts, and made reconnoissances into the interior; and Colonel Rust with his white troops had actually appeared, when General Hunter, with one of his impulsive changes of purpose, altered his whole plan, and decided to abandon Jacksonville.

Once again, after the arrival of General Gillmore, we were sent up a Southern river. A night was chosen when the moon set late, so that we could reach our objective point a little before daybreak; thus concealing our approach, and giving us the whole day to work in. It was needed on the South Edisto, for we found across a bend of the river a solid structure of palings which it took the period of a whole tide to remove, and which, had not my lieutenant-colonel (C. T. Trowbridge) been an engineer officer, could not have been displaced at all. Even then only two out of our three small steamers could ascend the shallow stream; and of these, one soon grounded in the mud, and the other was disabled by a shore battery. The expedition — which should never have been sent

without more accurate local reconnoissances — failed of its nominal end, which was the destruction of a railway bridge utterly beyond our reach. My own immediate object, which was recruiting, was accomplished, but at the final cost of health and subsequent military opportunities. As I stood on the deck, while we were in action with a shore battery, I felt a sudden blow in the side, doubling me up as if a Sullivan or a Fitzsimmons had struck me. My clothes were not torn, but very soon a large purple spot, called "ecchymosis" by the surgeons, covered the whole side, and for weeks I was confined to bed. I had supposed it to have been produced by the wind of a ball, but the surgeons declared that there could be no ecchymosis without actual contact, and that I must have been grazed by a grapeshot or an exploded shell. This was to have found myself only half an inch from death, yet, in Mercutio's phrase, it was enough. I was long in hospital, my life being saved from the perils of peritonitis, I was told, by the fact that I had never used whiskey. I came North on a furlough in 1863; went back too soon, as men often did; found the regiment subdivided and demoralized; and having to overwork in bringing it into shape, with the effects of malaria added, I had ultimately to resign in the autumn of 1864,

after two years' service, foregoing all hopes of further military experience. Up to this time I had stood the influence of a malarial climate better than most of my officers, and had received from the major, a somewhat frank and outspoken personage, the assurance that I was "tougher than a biled owl."

During a part of my invalidism I was sheltered — together with my surgeon, who was also ill — by my friend Mrs. Jean M. Lander, widow of the celebrated General Lander, and well known in earlier days on the dramatic stage; a woman much respected and beloved by all who knew her fine qualities. She had tried to establish hospitals, but had always been met by the somewhat whimsical opposition of Miss Dorothea L. Dix, the national superintendent of nurses, a lady who had something of the habitual despotism of the saints, and who had somewhat exasperated the soldiers by making anything like youth or good looks an absolute bar to hospital employment; the soldiers naturally reasoning that it assisted recovery to have pleasant faces to look upon. One of Miss Dix's circulars read thus: "No woman under thirty years need apply to serve in government hospitals. All nurses are required to be very plain-looking women. Their dresses must be brown or black, with no bows, no curls or jew-

elry, and no hoopskirts." Undaunted by this well-meant prohibition, Mrs. Lander, who was then a little more than thirty, but irreclaimably good looking, came down to Beaufort, South Carolina, accompanied by her mother, in the hope of establishing a hospital there. A sudden influx of wounded men gave General Saxton, erelong, the opportunity of granting her wish, and she entered with immense energy into her new task. She had on her hands some fifty invalid soldiers, and took for their use an empty building, which had yet to be fitted up, warmed, and properly furnished; even the requisite beds were difficult to obtain. She would come in abruptly some morning and say to Dr. Rogers and myself, "Gentlemen, to-day I must remove every bedstead in this house to the hospital building. You have blankets?" We could only meekly respond that we had blankets, and that the floor was wide. Twenty-four hours after, it would be, "Gentlemen, this day the cooking-stove goes! Your servants can cook by the open fire?" Oh yes, our servants could easily manage that, we replied, and accepted the inadequate results. One day there came a rap at the old-fashioned door-knocker, and Mrs. Lander, passing swiftly through the hall, flung the portal open regally, as if it were in Macbeth's palace. We heard a slender voice explaining

that the visitor was the Reverend Mr. So-and-So from New York, just arrived by steamer. "Mr. So-and-So?" said our prima donna. "Delighted to see you, sir! Can you dress wounds?" — this in Siddons tones. The poor man started back, and said apologetically, "Spiritual wounds, madam!" "No time for that, sir, now, — no time for that; there are still thirty men in yonder hospital with no beds to lie on; we must secure the common comforts first." Timidly explaining that he had come from the North to Beaufort for his health, and that he had been recommended to her for "a comfortable lodging," the pallid youth withdrew. It was no fault of his that he was forlorn and useless and decidedly in the way at an army station; but I could not help wondering if, after his return, he would preach a sermon on the obvious deference due to man as the military sex, and on the extreme uselessness of women in time of war.

I have given few details as to my way of living in South Carolina and Florida, because much of it was described a few years after in a volume called "Army Life in a Black Regiment," which was translated into French by Madame de Gasparin in 1884. There was plenty that was picturesque about this experience, and there were some things that were dangerous; we all fought, for instance, with

ropes around our necks, the Confederate authorities having denied to officers of colored regiments the usual privileges, if taken prisoners, and having required them to be treated as felons. Personally, I never believed that they would execute this threat, and so far as we were concerned they had no opportunity; but the prospect of hanging was not a pleasant thing even if kept in the background, nor was it agreeable to our friends at home. In other respects my life in the army had been enjoyable; but it had been, after all, one mainly of outpost and guerrilla duty, and I had shared in none of the greater campaigns of the war. I had once received from an officer, then high in influence, what was equivalent to an offer of promotion, if I would only write a letter to Senator Sumner asking for it; but this I had declined to do. As my promotion to a colonelcy had come unsought, so, I preferred, should any higher commission. For nominal rank I cared little, and I should have been unwilling to leave my regiment; but I should have liked to see great battles and to fill out my experience through all the grades, if it had been possible. I came nearest to this larger experience in the case of the aimless but bloody engagement of Olustee, where I should have commanded a brigade had not my regiment been ordered

back, even after being actually embarked for Florida.

I never felt at all sure how far up in the service I might have climbed, even under the most favorable circumstances; for that was always a hard thing to predict of any one, in those days, even apart from the frequent occurrences of favoritism and injustice. I saw around me men who had attained a much higher position than mine without a greater outfit, perhaps, of brains or energy; but whether I could have shown that wide grasp, that ready military instinct, which belong to the natural leader of large forces, I can never know; and I am afraid that I might always have been a little too careful of my men. Certainly, I should have been absolutely incapable of that unsparing and almost merciless sacrifice of them which made the reputation of some very eminent officers; while for the mere discharge of ordinary duty I might have been as good as my neighbors. After all, it must be admitted that marked military talent is a special gift, and a man who has not had the opportunity can no more tell whether he would have displayed that faculty than a man who has never learned chess can tell whether he might or might not have developed into a champion player. For the final result, my

sagacious elder brother felt content, he told me, that I should leave the army with the rank of colonel only. He said, with his accustomed keen philosophy, "A man may go through his later life quite respectably under the title of colonel, but that of general is too much for a civilian to bear up under, and I am glad you stopped short of it." For myself, I felt that to have commanded, with fair credit, the first slave-regiment in the Civil War was well worth one man's life or health ; and I lived to see nearly two hundred thousand (178,975) black soldiers marching in that column where the bayonets of the First South Carolina had once gleamed alone.

When I left the service, two years of army life, with small access to books, had so far checked the desire for active literary pursuits, on my part, that I should actually have been content not to return to them. I should have liked better to do something that involved the charge and government of men, as for instance in the position of agent of a large mill or a railway enterprise. This mood of mind was really identical with that which led some volunteer officers to enter the regular army, and others to undertake cotton-raising at the South. In few cases did this impulse last long ; a regular army career in time of peace usually proving

unattractive, as did also the monotony of the plantation. In my own case this unsettled feeling soon passed away, and the old love of letters rapidly revived; — the editing of the "Harvard Memorial Biographies" affording an easy transition, as was also the work of translating the noble writings of Epictetus, of whom I could think with satisfaction that he was himself a slave, and was the favorite author of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the black military leader. Moreover, my wife had removed for health's sake to Newport, Rhode Island, and I found ready distraction in the new friendships and social life of that attractive place of residence. Of this portion of my life I have already given some glimpse in the novel called "Malbone" and in the collection of sketches called "Oldport Days," so that I will not dwell further upon it here.

## IX

### LITERARY LONDON TWENTY YEARS AGO

No day in an American's recollection can easily be more cheerful than that in which he first found himself within reach of London, prepared, as Willis said half a century ago, to see whole shelves of his library walking about in coats and gowns. This event did not happen to me for the first time until I was forty-eight years old, and had been immersed at home in an atmosphere of tolerably cultivated men and women; but the charm of the new experience was none the less great, and I inspected my little parcel of introductory letters as if each were a key to unlock a world unknown. Looking back, I cannot regret that I did not have this experience earlier in life. Valentine, in the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," says that homekeeping youth have ever homely wits; yet it is something to have wits at all, and perhaps there is more chance of this if one is not transplanted too soon. Our young people are now apt to be sent too early to Europe, and therefore do not approach it with their

own individualities sufficiently matured; but in those days foreign travel was much more of an enterprise than now, and no one could accuse me, on my arrival, of being unreasonably young.

I visited London in 1872, and again in 1878, and some recollections based on the letters and diaries of those two years will be combined in this chapter. The London atmosphere and *dramatis personæ* changed little within the interval, but the whole period was separated by a distinct literary cycle from that on which Emerson looked back in 1843. He then wrote that Europe had already lost ground; that it was not "as in the golden days when the same town would show the traveler the noble heads of Scott, of Mackintosh, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Cuvier, and Humboldt." Yet I scarcely missed even these heads, nearly thirty years later than the time when he wrote, in the prospect of seeing Carlyle, Darwin, Tennyson, Browning, Tyndall, Huxley, Matthew Arnold, and Froude, with many minor yet interesting personalities. Since the day when I met these distinguished men another cycle has passed, and they have all disappeared. Of those whom I saw twenty-five years ago at the Athenæum Club, there remain only Herbert Spencer and the delightful Irish poet Aubrey de Vere, —

and though the Club now holds on its lists the names of a newer generation, Besant and Hardy, Lang and Haggard, I cannot think that what has been added quite replaces what has been lost. Yet the younger generation itself may think otherwise; and my task at present deals with the past alone. It has to do with the older London group, and I may write of this the more freely inasmuch as I did not write during the lifetime of the men described; nor do I propose, even at this day, to report conversations with any persons now living.

My first duty in England was, of course, to ascertain my proper position as an American, and to know what was thought of us. This was easier twenty-five years ago than it now is, since the English ignorance of Americans was then even greater than it is to-day, and was perhaps yet more frankly expressed. One of the first houses where I spent an evening was the very hospitable home of a distinguished scholar, then the president of the Philological Society, and the highest authority on the various dialects of the English language; but I was led to think that his sweet and kindly wife had not fully profited by his learning. She said to me, "Is it not rather strange that you Americans, who seem such a friendly and cordial race, should invariably address a newcomer

as 'stranger,' while we English, who are thought to be cold and distant, are more likely to say 'my friend'?" She would scarcely credit it when I told her that I had hardly ever in my life been greeted by the word she thought so universal; and then she added, "I have been told that Americans begin every sentence with 'Well, stranger, I guess.'" I was compelled to plead guilty to the national use of two of these words, but still demurred as to the "stranger." Then she sought for more general information, and asked if it were really true, as she had been told, that railway trains in America were often stopped for the purpose of driving cattle off the track. I admitted to her that in some regions of the far West, where cattle abounded and fencing material was scarce, this might still be done; and I did not think it necessary to say that I had seen it done, in my youth, within twenty miles of Boston. But I explained that we Americans, being a very inventive race, had devised a little apparatus to be placed in front of the locomotive in order to turn aside all obstructions; and I told her that this excellent invention was called a cow-catcher. She heard this with interest, and then her kindly face grew anxious, and she said hesitatingly, "But is n't it rather dangerous for the boy?" I said wonder-

ingly, "What boy?" and she reiterated, "For the boy, don't you know, — the cow-catcher." Her motherly fancy had depicted an unfortunate youth balanced on the new contrivance, probably holding on with one arm, and dispersing dangerous herds with the other.

One had also to meet, at that time, sharp questions as to one's origin, and sometimes unexpected sympathy when this was ascertained. A man of educated appearance was then often asked, — and indeed is still liable to be asked, — on his alluding to America, how much time he had spent there. This question was put to me, in 1878, by a very lively young maiden at the table of a clergyman who was my host at Reading; she went on to inform me that I spoke English differently from any Americans she had ever seen, and she had known "heaps of them" in Florence. When I had told her that I spoke the language just as I had done for about half a century, and as my father and mother had spoken it before me, she caught at some other remark of mine, and asked with hearty surprise, "But you do not mean that you really like being an American, do you?" When I said that I should be very sorry not to be, she replied, "I can only say that I never thought of such a thing; I supposed that you were all Americans because you

could n't help it;" and I assured her that we had this reason, also. She sung, later in the evening, with a dramatic power I never heard surpassed, Kingsley's thrilling ballad of "Lorraine," of which the heroine is a jockey's wife, who is compelled by her husband to ride a steeple-chase, at which she meets her death. The young singer had set the ballad to music, and it was one of those coincidences stranger than any fiction that she herself was killed by a runaway horse but a few months later.

An American had also to accustom himself, in those days, to the surprise which might be expressed at his knowing the commonplaces of English history, and especially of English legend. On first crossing the border into Scotland, I was asked suddenly by my only railway companion, a thin, keen man with high cheek-bones, who had hitherto kept silence, "Did ye ever hear of Yarrow?" I felt inclined to answer, like a young American girl of my acquaintance when asked by a young man if she liked flowers, "What a silly question!" Restraining myself, I explained to him that every educated American was familiar with any name mentioned by Burns, by Scott, or in the "Border Minstrelsy." Set free by this, he showed me many things and places which I was glad to see, — passes by which the High-

land raiders came down, valleys where they hid the cattle they had lifted; he showed me where their fastnesses were, and where "Tintock tap" was, on which a lassie might doubtless still be wooed if she had siller enough. By degrees we came to literature in general, and my companion proved to be the late Principal Shairp, professor of poetry at Oxford, and author of books well known in America.

I encountered still another instance of the curious social enigma then afforded by the American in England, when I was asked, soon after my arrival, to breakfast with Mr. Froude, the historian. As I approached the house I saw a lady speaking to some children at the door, and she went in before I reached it. Being admitted, I saw another lady glance at me from the region of the breakfast parlor, and was also dimly aware of a man who looked over the stairway. After I had been cordially received and was seated at the breakfast-table, it gradually came out that the first lady was Mrs. Froude's sister, the second was Mrs. Froude herself, while it was her husband who had looked over the stairs; and I learned furthermore that they had severally decided that, whoever I was, I could not be the American gentleman who was expected at breakfast. What was their conception of an American, — what

tomahawk and scalping-knife were looked for, what bearskin or bareskin, or whether it was that I had omitted the customary war-whoop, — this never was explained. Perhaps it was as in Irving's case, who thought his kind reception in England due to the fact that he used a goose-quill in his hand instead of sticking it in his hair, — a distinction which lost all its value, however, with the advent of steel pens. At any rate, my reception was as kind as possible, though my interest in Froude, being based wholly on his early book, "The Nemesis of Faith," was somewhat impaired by the fact that he treated that work as merely an indiscretion of boyhood, and was more interested in himself as the author of a history, which, unluckily, I had not then read. We met better upon a common interest in Carlyle, a few days later, and he took me to see that eminent author, and to join the afternoon walk of the two in Hyde Park. Long ago, in the "Atlantic Monthly," I described this occasion, and dwelt on the peculiar quality of Carlyle's laugh, which, whenever it burst out in its full volume, had the effect of dissolving all the clouds of his apparent cynicism and leaving clear sky behind. Whatever seeming ungraciousness had preceded, his laugh revealed the genuine humorist at last, so that he almost seemed to have been

playing with himself in the fierce things he had said. When he laughed, he appeared instantly to follow Emerson's counsel and to write upon the lintels of his doorpost "Whim!" I was especially impressed with this peculiar quality during our walk in the park.

Nothing could well be more curious than the look and costume of Carlyle. He had been living in London nearly forty years, yet he had the untamed aspect of one just arrived from Ecclefechan. He wore "an old experienced coat," such as Thoreau attributes to his Scotch fisherman, — one having that unreasonably high collar of other days, in which the head was sunk; his hair was coarse and stood up at its own will; his bushy whiskers were thrust into prominence by one of those stiff collars which the German students call "father-killers," from a tradition that the sharp points once pierced the jugular vein of a parent during an affectionate embrace. In this guise, with a fur cap and a stout walking-stick, he accompanied Froude and myself on our walk. I observed that near his Chelsea home the passers-by regarded him with a sort of familiar interest, farther off with undisguised curiosity, and at Hyde Park, again, with a sort of recognition, as of an accustomed figure. At one point on our way some poor children were playing on a bit of rough ground

lately included in a park, and they timidly stopped their frolic as we drew near. The oldest boy, looking from one to another of us, selected Carlyle as the least formidable, and said, "I say, mister, may we roll on this here grass?" Carlyle stopped, leaning on his staff, and said in his homeliest accents, "Yes, my little fellow, ye may r-r-roll at discraytion;" upon which the children resumed their play, one little girl repeating his answer audibly, as if in a vain effort to take in the whole meaning of the long word.

One of my pleasantest London dinners was at the ever hospitable house of the late Sir Frederick Pollock; the other persons present being Lady Pollock, with her eldest son, the present wearer of the title, and two most agreeable men, — Mr. Venable, for many years the editor of the annual summary of events in the "London Times," and Mr. Newton, of the British Museum. The latter was an encyclopædia of art and antiquities, and Mr. Venable of all the social gossip of a century; it was like talking with Horace Walpole. Of one subject alone I knew more than they did, namely, Gilbert Stuart's pictures, one of which, called The Skater, had just been unearthed in London, and was much admired. "Why don't they inquire about the artist?" said Sir Fred-

erick Pollock. "He might have done something else." They would hardly believe that his pictures were well known in America, and that his daughter was still a conspicuous person in society. Much of the talk fell upon lawyers and clergymen. They told a story of Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, that he had actually evaded payment of his tailor's bill on the ground that it had not been presented for six years, which in England is the legal limit. They vied with one another in tales of the eccentricities of English clergymen, — of one who was eighteen years incumbent of an important parish, and lived in France all the time; of another who did not conduct service in the afternoon, as that was the time when it was necessary for him to take his spaniels out; of another who practiced his hawks in the church; of another who, being a layman, became master of Caius College (pronounced Keys) at Oxford, had a church living at his disposal, and presented it to himself, taking orders for the purpose. After officiating for the first time he said to the sexton, "Do you know, that's a very good service of your church?" He had literally never heard it before! But all agreed that these tales were of the past, and that the tribe of traditional fox-hunting and horse-racing parsons was almost extinct. I can testify,

however, to having actually encountered one of the latter class within a year.

I met Matthew Arnold one day by appointment at the Athenæum, in 1878, and expressed some surprise that he had not been present at the meeting of the Association Littéraire Internationale which I had just attended in Paris. He said that he had declined because such things were always managed with a sole view to the glorification of France; yet he admitted that France was the only nation which really held literature in honor, as was to be seen in its copyright laws, — England and America caring far less for it, he thought. He told me that his late address on "Equality" was well enough received by all the audience except the Duke of Northumberland, the presiding officer, and in general better by the higher class, which well knew that it was materialized, than by the middle class, which did not know that it was vulgarized. Lord William Russell, whom I found talking with him as I came up, had said to him, with amusement, "There was I sitting on the very front seat, during the lecture, in the character of the Wicked Lord." Arnold fully agreed with a remark which I quoted to him from Mrs. George Bancroft, who had been familiar with two courts, to the effect that there was far more sycophancy to rank among

literary men in London than in Berlin. She said that she had never known an English scholar who, if he had chanced to dine with a nobleman, would not speak of it to everybody, whereas no German savant would think of mentioning such a thing. "Very true," replied Arnold, "but the German would be less likely to be invited to the dinner." He thought that rank was far more exclusive and narrow in Germany, as seen in the fact that men of rank did not marry out of their circle, a thing which frequently took place in England. He also pointed out that the word *mésalliance* was not English, nor was there any word in our language to take its place. Arnold seemed to me, personally, as he had always seemed in literature, a keen but by no means judicial critic, and in no proper sense a poet. That he is held to be such is due, in my judgment, only to the fact that he has represented the current attitude of mind in many cultivated persons.

I visited Darwin twice in his own house at an interval of six years, once passing the night there. On both occasions I found him the same, but with health a little impaired after the interval, — always the same simple, noble, absolutely truthful soul. Without the fascinating and boyish eagerness of Agassiz, he was

also utterly free from the vehement partisanship which this quality brings with it, and he showed a mind ever humble and open to new truth. Tall and flexible, with the overhanging brow and long features best seen in Mrs. Cameron's photograph, he either lay half reclined on the sofa or sat on high cushions, obliged continually to guard against the cruel digestive trouble which haunted his whole life. I remember that at my first visit, in 1872, I was telling him of an address before the Philological Society by Dr. Alexander J. Ellis, in which he had quoted from "Through the Looking-Glass" the description of what were called portmanteau words, into which various meanings were crammed. As I spoke, Mrs. Darwin glided quietly away, got the book, and looked up the passage. "Read it out, my dear," said her husband; and as she read the amusing page, he laid his head back and laughed heartily. It was altogether delightful to see the man who had revolutionized the science of the world giving himself wholly to the enjoyment of Alice and her pretty nonsense. Akin to this was his hearty enjoyment of Mark Twain, who had then hardly begun to be regarded as above the Josh Billings grade of humorist; but Darwin was amazed that I had not read "The Jumping Frog," and said that he always kept it by

his bedside for midnight amusement. I recall with a different kind of pleasure the interest he took in my experience with the colored race, and the faith which he expressed in the negroes. This he afterward stated more fully in a letter to me, which may be found in his published memoirs. It is worth recording that even the incredulous Carlyle had asked eagerly about the colored soldiers, and had drawn the conclusion, of his own accord, that in their case the negroes should be enfranchised. "You could do no less," he said, "for the men who had stood by you."

Darwin's house at Beckenham was approached from Orpington station by a delightful drive through lanes, among whose tufted hedges I saw the rare spectacle of two American elms, adding those waving and graceful lines which we their fellow countrymen are apt to miss in England. Within the grounds there were masses of American rhododendrons, which grow so rapidly in England, and these served as a background to flower-beds more gorgeous than our drier climate can usually show.

At my second visit Darwin was full of interest in the Peabody Museum at Yale College, and quoted with approval what Huxley had told him, that there was more to be learned

from that one collection than from all the museums of Europe. But for his chronic sea-sickness, he said, he would visit America to see it. He went to bed early that night, I remember, and the next morning I saw him, soon after seven, apparently returning from a walk through the grounds, — an odd figure, with white beard, and with a short cape wrapped round his shoulders, striding swiftly with his long legs. He said that he always went out before breakfast, — besides breakfasting at the very un-English hour of half-past seven, — and that he was also watching some little experiments. His son added reproachfully, "There it is : he pretends not to be at work, but he is always watching some of his little experiments, as he calls them, and gets up in the night to see them." Nothing could be more delightful than the home relations of the Darwin family ; and the happy father once quoted to me a prediction made by some theological authority that his sons would show the terrible effects of such unrighteous training, and added proudly, looking round at them, "I do not think I have much reason to be ashamed."

I think it was on this same day that I passed from Darwin to Browning, meeting the latter at the Athenæum Club. It seemed strange to ask a page to find Mr. Browning for me, as if

it were the easiest thing imaginable; and it reminded me of the time when the little daughter of a certain poetess quietly asked at the dinner-table, in my hearing, between two bites of an apple, "Mamma, did I ever see Mr. Shakespeare?" The page spoke to a rather short and strongly built man who sat in a window-seat, and who jumped up and grasped my hand so cordially that it might have suggested the remark of Madame Navarro (Mary Anderson) about him, — made, however, at a later day, — that he did not appear like a poet, but rather "like one of our agreeable Southern gentlemen." He seemed a man of every day, or like the typical poet of his own "How It Strikes a Contemporary." In all this he was, as will be seen later, the very antipodes of Tennyson. He had a large head of German shape, broadening behind, with light and thin gray hair and whitish beard; he had blue eyes, and the most kindly heart. It seemed wholly appropriate that he should turn aside presently to consult Anthony Trollope about some poor author for whom they held funds. He expressed pleasure at finding in me an early subscriber to his "Bells and Pomegranates," and told me how he published that series in the original cheap form in order to save his father's money, and that single numbers now sold for

ten or fifteen pounds. He was amused at my wrath over some changes which he had made in later editions of those very poems, and readily admitted, on my suggesting it, that they were merely a concession to obtuse readers ; he promised, indeed, to alter some of the verses back again, but — as is the wont of poets — failed to do so. I was especially struck with the way in which he spoke about his son, whose career as an artist had well begun, he said ; but it was an obstacle that people expected too much of him, as having had such a remarkable mother. It was told in the simplest way, as if there were nothing on the paternal side worth considering.

The most attractive literary headquarters in London, in those days, was, of course, the Athenæum Club. It used to be said that no man could have any question to ask which he could not find somebody to answer the same afternoon between five and six o'clock, at that Club. The Savile Club and Cosmopolitan Club were also attractive. The most agreeable private receptions of poets and artists were then to be found, I think, at the house of William Rossetti, where one not merely had the associations and atmosphere of a brilliant family, — which had already lost, however, its most gifted member, — but also encountered

the younger set of writers, who were all pre-raphaelites in art, and who read Morris, Swinburne, and for a time, at least, Whitman and even Joaquin Miller. There one met Mrs. Rossetti, who was the daughter of Madox Brown, and herself an artist; also Alma Tadema, just returned from his wedding journey to Italy with his beautiful wife. One found there men and women then coming forward into literature, but now much better known, — Edmund Gosse, Arthur O'Shaughnessy, Cayley, the translator of Dante, and Miss Robinson, now Madame Darmesteter. Sometimes I went to the receptions of our fellow countrywoman, Mrs. Moulton, then just beginning, but already promising the flattering success they have since attained. Once I dined with Professor Tyndall at the Royal Society, where I saw men whose names had long been familiar in the world of science, and found myself sitting next to a man of the most eccentric manners, who turned out to be Lord Lyttelton, well known to me by name as the Latin translator of Lord Houghton's poems. I amazed him, I remember, by repeating the opening verses of one of his translations.

I met Du Maurier once at a dinner party, before he had added literary to artistic successes. Some one had told me that he was

probably the most bored man in London, dining out daily, and being tired to death of it. This I could easily believe when I glanced at him, after the ladies had retired, lounging back in his chair with his hands in his pockets, and looking as if the one favor he besought of everybody was to let him alone. This mute defiance was rather stimulating, and as he sat next to me I was moved to disregard the implied prohibition ; for after all, one does not go to a dinner party in order to achieve silence ; one can do that at home. I ventured, therefore, to put to him the bold question how he could justify himself in representing the English people as so much handsomer than they or any other modern race — as I considerately added — really are. This roused him, as was intended ; he took my remark very good-humoredly, and pleaded guilty at once, but said that he pursued this course because it was much pleasanter to draw beauty than ugliness, and, moreover, because it paid better. "There is Keene," said he, "who is one of the greatest artists now living, but people do not like his pictures so well as mine, because he paints people as they really are." I then asked him where he got the situations and mottoes for his charming pictures of children in the London parks. He had an especial group, about

that time, who were always walking with a great dog and making delightful childish observations. He replied that his own children provided him with clever sayings for some time; and now that they had grown too old to utter them, his friends kept him supplied from their nurseries. I told him that he might imitate a lady I once knew in America, who, when her children were invited to any neighboring house to play, used to send by the maid who accompanied them a notebook and pencil, with the request that the lady of the house would jot down anything remarkable which they might say during the afternoon. He seemed amused at this; and a month or two later, when I took up a new London "Punch" at Zermatt, I found my veritable tale worked up into a picture: a fat, pudgy little mother handing a notebook to a rather stately and defiant young governess; while the children clustering round, and all looking just like the mother, suggested to the observer a doubt whether their combined intellects could furnish one line for the record. It was my scene, though with a distinct improvement; and this was my first and only appearance, even by deputy, in the pages of "Punch."

It was in 1872, on my first visit to England, that I saw Tennyson. That visit was a very

brief one, and it curiously happened that in the choice which often forces itself upon the hurried traveler, between meeting a great man and seeing an historic building, I was compelled to sacrifice Salisbury Cathedral to this poet, as I had previously given up York Minster for Darwin. Both sacrifices were made on the deliberate ground, which years have vindicated, that the building would probably last for my lifetime, while the man might not. I had brought no letter to Tennyson, and indeed my friend James T. Fields had volunteered a refusal of any, so strong was the impression that the poet disliked to be bored by Americans; but when two ladies whom I had met in London, Lady Pollock and Miss Anne Thackeray, — afterwards Mrs. Ritchie, — had kindly offered to introduce me, and to write in advance that I was coming, it was not in human nature, at least in American nature, to decline. I spent the night at Cowes, and was driven eight miles from the hotel to Farringford by a very intelligent young groom who had never heard of the poet; and when we reached the door of the house, the place before me seemed such a haven of peace and retirement that I actually shrank from disturbing those who dwelt therein. I even found myself recalling a tale of Tennyson and his wife, who were sitting beneath a

tree and talking unreservedly, when they discovered, by a rustling in the boughs overhead, that two New York reporters had taken position in the branches and were putting down the conversation. Fortunately, I saw on the drawing-room table an open letter from one of the ladies just mentioned, announcing my approach, and it lay near a window, through which, as I had been told, the master of the house did not hesitate to climb, by way of escape from any unwelcome visitor.

I therefore sent up my name. Presently I heard a rather heavy step in the adjoining room, and there stood in the doorway the most un-English looking man I had yet seen. He was tall and high-shouldered, careless in dress, and while he had a high and domed forehead, yet his brilliant eyes and tangled hair and beard gave him rather the air of a partially reformed Corsican bandit, or else an imperfectly secularized Carmelite monk, than of a decorous and well-groomed Englishman. He greeted me shyly, gave me his hand, which was in those days a good deal for an Englishman, and then sidled up to the mantelpiece, leaned on it, and said, with the air of a vexed schoolboy, "I am rather afraid of you Americans; your countrymen do not treat me very well. There was Bayard Taylor" — and then

he went into a long narration of some grievance incurred through an indiscreet letter of that well-known journalist. Strange to say, the effect of this curious attack was to put me perfectly at my ease. It was as if I had visited Shakespeare, and had found him in a pet because some one of my fellow countrymen had spelled his name wrong. I knew myself to be wholly innocent and to have no journalistic designs, nor did I ever during Tennyson's lifetime describe the interview. He perhaps recognized my good intentions, and took me to his study, then to his garden, where the roses were advanced beyond any I had yet seen in England. I was struck, in his conversation, with that accuracy of outdoor knowledge which one sees in his poems; he pointed out, for instance, which ferns were American, and which had been attempted in this country, but had refused to grow. He talked freely about his own books, and it seemed to me that he must be like Wordsworth, as we find him in the descriptions of contemporaries, — a little too isolated in his daily life, and too much absorbed in the creations of his own fancy. Lord Houghton, his lifelong friend, said to me afterwards, "Tennyson likes unmixed flattery." This I should not venture to say, but I noticed that when he was speaking of other men, he

mentioned as an important trait in their character whether they liked his poems or not, — Lowell, he evidently thought, did not. Perhaps this is a habit of all authors, and it was only that Tennyson spoke out, like a child, what others might have concealed.

He soon offered, to my great delight, to take me to the house of Mrs. Cameron, the celebrated amateur photographer, who lived close by. We at once came upon Mr. Cameron — a very picturesque figure, having fine white hair and beard, and wearing a dressing-gown of pale blue with large black velvet buttons, and a heavy gold chain. I had heard it said that Mrs. Cameron selected her housemaids for their profiles, that she might use them for saints and madonnas in her photographic groups; and it turned out that all these damsels were upstairs, watching round the sick-bed of the youngest, who was a great favorite in the Tennyson family. We were ushered into the chamber, where a beautiful child lay unconscious upon the bed, with weeping girls around; and I shall never forget the scene when Tennyson bent over the pillow, with his sombre Italian look, and laid his hand on the unconscious forehead; it was like a picture by Ribera or Zamacois. The child, as I afterwards heard, never recovered consciousness,

and died within a few days. Presently Mrs. Cameron led us downstairs again, and opened chests of photographs for me to choose among. I chose one, The Two Angels at the Sepulchre, for which one of the maid servants had stood as a model; another of Tennyson's Eleanore, for which Mrs. Stillman (Miss Spartalis) had posed; and three large photographs of Darwin, Carlyle, and Tennyson himself, — the last of these being one which he had christened The Dirty Monk, and of which he wrote, at Mrs. Cameron's request, in my presence, a certificate that it was the best likeness ever taken of him. I have always felt glad to have seen Tennyson not merely in contact with a stranger like myself, but as he appeared among these friendly people, and under the influence of a real emotion of sympathy, showing the deeper nature of the man.

No one knows better than myself how slight and fragmentary are the recollections here recorded, yet even such glimpses occasionally suggest some aspect of character which formal biographers have missed. A clever woman once said to me that she did not know which really gave the more knowledge of a noted person, — to have read all he had written and watched all he had done, or, on the other hand,

to have taken one moment's glance at his face. As we grow older, we rely more and more on this first glance. I never felt for an instant that I had really encountered in England men of greater calibre than I had met before, — for was I not the fellow countryman of Emerson and Hawthorne, of Webster and Phillips? — yet, after all, the ocean lends a glamour to the unseen world beyond it, and I was glad to have had a sight of that world, also. I was kindly dismissed from it, after my first brief visit, by a reception given me at the rooms of the Anglo-American Club, where Thomas Hughes — whom I had first known at Newport, Rhode Island — presided, and where Lord Houghton moved some too flattering resolutions, which were seconded by the present Sir Frederick Pollock. Returning to my American home, I read, after a few days, in the local newspaper (the "Newport Mercury"), that I was reported to have enjoyed myself greatly in England, and to have been kindly received, "especially among servants and rascals." An investigation by the indignant editor revealed the fact that the scrap had been copied from another newspaper; and that a felicitous misprint had substituted the offending words for the original designation of my English friends as "savants and radicals."

## X

### LITERARY PARIS TWENTY YEARS AGO

I REACHED Paris, from London, on the morning of May 30, 1878, arriving just in time for admission to the Théâtre des Folies Dramatiques, where the Voltaire centenary celebration was to be held that day, with Victor Hugo for the orator. As I drove up, the surrounding streets were full of people going toward the theatre; while the other streets were so empty as to recall that fine passage in Landor's "Imaginary Conversations" where Demosthenes describes the depopulation of all other spots in Athens except that where he is speaking to the people. The neighborhood of the theatre was placarded with announcements stating that every seat was sold; and it was not until I had explained to a policeman that I was an American who had crossed from London expressly for this celebration, that he left his post and hunted up a speculator from whom I could buy seats. They were twin seats, which I shared with a young Frenchman, who led me in through a crowd so great that the old women

who, in Parisian theatres, guide you to your place and take your umbrella, found their occupation almost gone.

It was my first experience of French public oratory ; and while I was aware of the resources of the language and the sympathetic power of the race, I was not prepared to see these so superbly conspicuous in public meetings. The ordinary appreciation of eloquence among the French seemed pitched in the key of our greatest enthusiasm, with the difference that their applause was given to the form as well as to the substance, and was given with the hands only, never with the feet. Even in its aspect the audience was the most noticeable I ever saw: the platform and the five galleries were filled almost wholly with men, and these of singularly thoughtful and distinguished bearing, — an assembly certainly superior to Parliament or Congress in its look of intellect. A very few were in the blouse of the *ouvrier*, and there was all over the house an amount of talking that sounded like vehement quarreling, though it was merely good-natured chatter. There were only French people and French words around me, and though my immediate companion was from the provinces and knew nobody, yet there was on the other side a very handsome man, full of zeal and replete with

information. When I asked him whether Victor Hugo was yet upon the platform, he smiled, and said that I would not ask such a question if I knew the shout that would go up from the crowd when he came in.

Applaud they certainly did when a white head was seen advancing through the throng upon the stage; and the five galleries and the parquet seemed to rock with excitement as he took his seat. I should have known Victor Hugo anywhere from the resemblance to his pictures, except that his hair and beard, cropped short, were not quite so rough and hirsute as they are often depicted. He bowed his strong leonine head to the audience, and then seated himself, the two other speakers sitting on either side of him; while the bust of the smiling Voltaire with a wreath of laurel and flowers rose behind and above their heads. The bust was imposing, and the smile was kindly and genial, — a smile such as one seldom sees attributed to Voltaire. The first speaker, M. Spuller, was a fine-looking man, large, fair, and of rather English bearing; he rested one hand on the table, and made the other hand do duty for two, and I might almost say for a dozen, after the manner of his race. Speaking without notes, he explained the plan of the celebration, and did it so well that sentence after sentence was received with "Bravo!"

or "Admirable!" or "Oh-h-h!" in a sort of profound literary enjoyment.

These plaudits were greater still in case of the next speaker, M. Emile Deschanel, the author of a book on Aristophanes, and well known as a politician. He also was a large man of distinguished bearing. In his speech he drew a parallel between the careers of Victor Hugo and Voltaire, but dwelt especially upon that of the latter. One of the most skillful portions of the address touched on that dangerous ground, Voltaire's outrageous poem of "La Pucelle," founded on the career of Jeanne d'Arc. M. Deschanel claimed that Voltaire had at least set her before the world as the saviour of France. He admitted that the book bore the marks of the period, that it was *licencieux et coupable;* yet he retorted fiercely on the clerical party for their efforts to protest against Voltaire on this account. When he said, at last, with a sudden flash of parting contempt, "Who was it that burned her?" (Qui est-ce qui l'a brûlée?) he dismissed the clergy and the subject with a wave of the hand that was like the flashing of the scimitar of Saladin. Then followed a perfect tempest of applause, and Victor Hugo took the stage.

His oration on Voltaire — since translated by Mr. James Parton — was delivered from notes,

written in an immense hand on sheets twice as large as any foolscap paper I had ever seen; and he read from these without glasses. He was at this time seventy-six, but looked ten years younger. He stood behind two great sconces, each holding six candles; above these appeared his strong white-bearded face, and above him rose Voltaire and his laurel wreath. He used much gesture, and in impassioned moments waved his arm above his head, the fingers apart and trembling with emotion. Sometimes he clapped one hand to his head as if to tear out some of his white hairs, though this hardly seemed, at the moment, melodramatic. His voice was vigorous, and yet from some defect of utterance, I lost more of what he said than in case of the other speakers. Others around me made the same complaint. His delivery, however, was as characteristic as his literary style, and quite in keeping with it, being a series of brilliant detached points. It must be a stimulating thing, indeed, to speak to a French audience, — to men who give sighs of delight over a fine phrase, and shouts of enthusiasm over a great thought. The most striking part of Hugo's address, to my mind, was his defense of the smile of Voltaire, and his turning of the enthusiasm for the pending Exposition into an appeal for international peace. Never was there a more

powerful picture than his sketch of "that terrific International Exposition called a field of battle."

After the address the meeting ended, — there was no music, which surprised me, — and every one on the platform rushed headlong at Victor Hugo. Never before had I quite comprehended the French effervescence as seen in the Chambre des Députés; but here it did not seem childish, — only natural; as where Deschanel, during his own speech, had once turned and taken Victor Hugo's hand and clapped him caressingly on the shoulder. The crowd dispersed more easily than I expected; for I had said to my French neighbor that there would be little chance for us in case of a fire, and he had shrugged his shoulders, looked up to heaven, and said, "Adieu!" I went out through a side entrance, where Hugo was just before me: it was hardly possible to get him into his carriage; the surrounding windows were crammed with people, and he drove away amid shouts. There was a larger and more popular demonstration that day at the Cirque Américain; but the eloquence was with us. To add to the general picturesqueness it was Ascension Day, and occasionally one met groups of little white-robed girls, who were still being trained, perhaps, to shudder at the very name of Voltaire, or even of Victor Hugo.

I dined one day with M. Talandier, a member of the "Extreme Left" in the Chambre des Députés, — a gentleman to whom my friend Conway had introduced me, they having become acquainted during our host's long exile in England. Louis Blanc, the historian, was present, with Mr. and Mrs. Conway and a few Frenchmen who spoke no English; and as there was also a pretty young girl who had been born in England of French parents, there was some confusion of tongues, though the Talandier family and Louis Blanc were at home in both languages. I was delighted to meet this last-named man, whose career had been familiar to me since the revolution of 1848. He was very short, yet square in person, and not insignificant; his French was clear and unusually deliberate, and I never missed a word, even when he was not addressing me. His small size and endless vivacity made him look like a French Tom Moore. He told many stories about the revolution, — one of an occasion where flags were to be presented by the provincial government to the regiments, and he was assigned to the very tallest colonel, a giant in size, who at once lifted Louis Blanc in his arms and hugged him to his breast. The narrator acted this all out inimitably, and told other stories, at one of which Carlyle had once laughed so that he

threw himself down and rolled on the floor, and Louis Blanc very nearly acted this out, also.

He seemed wonderfully gentle and sweet for one who had lived through so much; and confirmed, without bitterness, the report I had heard that he had never fully believed in the National Workshops, which failed under his charge in 1848, but that they were put into his hands by a rival who wished them and him to fail. Everything at the meal was simple, as our hosts lived in honorable poverty after their exile. We sat at table for a while after dinner, and then both sexes withdrew together. Through the open windows we heard the music from a students' dance-garden below, and could catch a glimpse of young girls, dressed modestly enough, and of their partners, dancing with that wonderful grace and agility which is possible only to young Frenchmen. All spheres of French life intermingle so closely that there seemed nothing really incongruous in all this exuberant gayety beneath the windows, while the two veteran radicals — who had very likely taken their share in such amusements while young — were fighting over again their battles of reform. Both now have passed away. Louis Blanc's "Ten Years" still finds readers, and some may remember the political papers written a few years later by Talandier for the "International Review," published in Boston.

By invitation of M. Talandier I spent a day (June 3) at Versailles, where the Chambre des Députés was then sitting, and discovered in the anteroom, or *salle d'attente*, that, by a curious rule, foreigners were excluded until four P. M.; yet the name of my host brought me in after a little delay. The hall was full of people waiting, each having to send his card to some member, naming on it the precise hour of arrival. The member usually appeared promptly, when an immense usher called in a stentorian voice for "la personne qui a fait demander M. Constant" — or whosoever it might be. Then the constituent — for such it commonly was — advanced toward the smiling member, who never looked bored; the mask of hospitality being probably the same, in this respect, throughout the legislative halls of the world. At last M. Talandier appeared, and found me a place among the Corps Diplomatique. The Chamber itself was more like the House of Representatives at Washington than like the House of Commons; the members had little locked desks, and some were writing letters, like our Representatives, though I saw no newspapers. The ordinary amount of noise was like that in our Congress, though there was, happily, no clapping of hands for pages; but when the members became especially excited, which in-

deed happened very often, it was like a cage of lions. For instance, I entered just as somebody had questioned the minister of war, General Borel, about an alleged interference with elections; and his defiant reply had enraged the "Lefts," or radicals, who constituted the majority of the assembly. They shouted and gesticulated, throwing up their hands and then slapping them on their knees very angrily, until the president rang his great bell, and they quieted down, lest he might put on his hat and adjourn the meeting. In each case the member speaking took his stand in the desk, or *tribune*, below the president; and the speeches were sometimes read, sometimes given without notes. The war minister, a stout, red-faced man, — always, the radicals said, half intoxicated, — stood with folded arms, and looked ready for a *coup d'état;* yet I heard it said about me that he would be compelled either to retreat or to resign. One saw at a glance how much profounder political differences must be in France than with us, since in that country they avowedly concern the very existence of the republic.

I saw no women at the Chambre des Députés, even as spectators, though they may have been concealed somewhere, as in the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons. An American was surprised, twenty years ago, with all the asso-

ciations of the French revolutions in his mind, to see in Paris so much less exhibition of interest in public affairs, or indeed of general knowledge, on the part of women than among men. For instance, on my going one day into a *crémerie* in a distant part of Paris, and partaking of a bowl of *bouillon bourgeois* at twenty-five centimes (five cents), the woman in charge was interested to hear that I was from America, and asked if they spoke German there. Her husband laughed at her ignorance, and said that America was discovered by Christophe Colon; going on to give a graphic and correct account of the early struggles of Columbus, of his voyage and his discouragement, of the mutiny of his men, of his seeing the light on the shore, and so on. Then he talked about Spain, the Italian republic, and other matters, saying that he had read it all in the school-books of the children and in other books. It was delightful to find a plain Frenchman in a blouse who, although coarse and rough-looking, could talk so intelligently; and his manners also had perfect courtesy. I could not but contrast him with the refined Italian youth who once asked a friend of mine in Florence what became of that young Genoese who sailed westward in 1492 to discover a new continent, and whether he had ever been heard of again.

On another day I dined with Louis Blanc in bachelor quarters, with the Talandiers, Conways, and one or two others. He was less gay than before, yet talked much of the condition and prospect of affairs. France, he said, was not a real republic, but a nominal one; having monarchical institutions and traditions, with a constitution well framed to make them perpetual. All the guests at his house seemed alike anxious for the future. The minister of war, whom I had heard virtually defying the people a few days before, was so well entrenched in power, they said, as to be practically beyond reach; and though the republicans controlled the Chambre des Députés, that was all, for the three other parties hated the republic more than one another. I asked Louis Blanc about Lamartine, whom he thought not a great man, and even injurious to the republic through his deference to the *bourgeoisie*. He described the famous speech in which Lamartine insisted on the tricolored flag instead of the red flag, and said it was quite wrong and ridiculous. The red flag did not mean blood at all, but order and unity, — it was the old oriflamme, the flag of Jeanne d'Arc. The tricolor had represented the three orders of the state, which were united into one by the revolution of 1848, so that the symbol was now

meaningless ; and the demand for the red flag was resisted only by the *bourgeoisie*. The red flag, moreover, had always been the summons to order, — when it was raised a mob had notice to disperse (as on the reading of the riot act) ; and it was absurd in Lamartine to represent it to the contrary, — he knew better. The other gentlemen all agreed with this, and with the estimate of Lamartine. After dinner M. Talandier played for us on the piano the Marseillaise, which is always thrilling, and then the Carmagnole, which is as formidable and dolorous as the guillotine itself. It was strange, in view of this beautiful city, constantly made more beautiful by opening new great avenues, some not yet finished, to recall these memories of all it had been through, and to see those who had been actors in its past scenes.

On leaving home I had been appointed a delegate to the Prison Discipline Congress, to be held that year at Stockholm ; and though I never got so far, I attended several preliminary meetings of delegates in London and Paris, and was especially pleased, in the latter place, to see the high deference yielded by French experts to our American leader, the late Dr. E. C. Wines, and also the familiar knowledge shown by these gentlemen in regard to American methods and experiments. Less satisfactory

was our national showing at another assemblage, where we should have been represented by a far larger and abler body of delegates. This was the Association Littéraire Internationale, which was appointed to assemble under the presidency of Victor Hugo, on June 11. I had gone to a few of the committee meetings at the rooms of the Société des Gens de Lettres, and, after my wonted fashion, had made an effort to have women admitted to the Association Littéraire; this attempt having especial reference to Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, who was then in Paris, and whose unusual command of the French language would have made her a much better delegate than most of the actual American representatives. In this effort I failed, although my judgment was afterwards vindicated when she gave great delight by a speech in French at a women's convention, where I heard her introduced by the courteous and delicately articulating chairman as "Meesses Ouardow."

As to the more literary gathering, the early meetings were as indeterminate and unsatisfying as such things are wont to be, so that I was quite unprepared for the number and character of those who finally assembled. The main meeting was in some masonic hall, whose walls were covered with emblems and Hebrew in-

scriptions; and although the men were nearly all strangers to me, it was something to know that they represented the most cultivated literary traditions of the world. When the roll was called, there proved to be eighty-five Frenchmen present, and only thirty-five from all other nations put together; five of this minority being Americans. I was the only one of these who had ever published a book, I think. Mr. W. H. Bishop was another delegate, but his first novel, "Detmold," had not yet reached completion in the "Atlantic;" while the three remaining delegates were an Irishman, an Englishman, and an American, all correspondents of American newspapers, the last of them being the late Edward King, since well known in literature. It is proper to add that several dentists, whose names had been duly entered as delegates, had not yet arrived; and that at later sessions there appeared, as more substantial literary factors, President Andrew D. White and Mr. George W. Smalley. On that first day, however, the English delegation was only a little more weighty than ours, including Blanchard Jerrold and Tom Taylor, with our own well-known fellow countryman "Hans Breitmann" (Charles Godfrey Leland), who did not know that there was to be an American delegation, and was naturally claimed by the citizens

of both his homes. Edmond About presided, a cheery, middle-aged Frenchman, short and square, with broad head and grayish beard; and I have often regretted that I took no list of the others of his nationality, since it would have doubtless included many who have since become known to fame. It is my impression that Adolphe Belot, Jules Claretie, and Hector Malot were there, and I am inclined to think that Max Nordau also was present.

The discussions were in French, and therefore of course animated; but they turned at first on unimportant subjects, and the whole thing would have been rather a disappointment to me — since Victor Hugo's opening address was to be postponed — had it not been rumored about that Tourguéneff was a delegate to the convention. Wishing more to see him than to behold any living Frenchman, I begged the ever kind secretary, M. Zaccone, to introduce me to him after the adjournment. He led me to a man of magnificent bearing, who towered above all the Frenchmen, and was, on the whole, the noblest and most attractive literary man whom I have ever encountered. I can think of no better way to describe him than by saying that he united the fine benignant head of Longfellow with the figure of Thackeray; not that Tourguéneff was as tall as the English novelist, but

he had as distinctly the effect of height, and afterwards, when he, Leland, and I stood together, we were undoubtedly the tallest men in the room. But the especial characteristic of Tourguéneff was a winning sweetness of manner, which surpassed even Longfellow's, and impressed one as being "kind nature's," to adopt Tennyson's distinction, and not merely those "next to best" manners which the poet attributes to the great.

Tourguéneff greeted us heartily as Americans, — Mr. Bishop also forming one of the group, — and spoke warmly of those of our compatriots whom he had known, as Emma Lazarus and Professor Boyesen. He seemed much gratified when I told him that the types of reformers in his latest book, "Virgin Soil," — which may be read to more advantage in its French form as "Terres Vierges," — appeared to me universal, not local, and that I was constantly reminded by them of men and women whom I had known in America. This pleased him, he explained, because the book had been very ill received in Russia, in spite of its having told the truth, as later events showed. All this he said in English, which he continued to use with us, although he did not speak it with entire ease and correctness, and although we begged him to speak in French. Afterwards,

when he was named as one of the vice-presidents of the new association, the announcement was received with applause, which was renewed when he went upon the platform; and it was noticeable that no other man was so honored. This showed his standing with French authors; but later I sought in vain for his photograph in the shops, and his name proved wholly unfamiliar. He was about to leave Paris, and I lost the opportunity of further acquaintance. Since then his fame has been temporarily obscured by the commanding figure of Tolstoi, but I fancy that it is now beginning to resume its prestige; and certainly there is in his books a more wholly sympathetic quality than in Tolstoi's, with almost equal power. In his "Poems in Prose" — little known among us, I fear, in spite of the admirable translation made by Mrs. Perry — there is something nearer to the peculiar Hawthornesque quality of imagination than in any other book I know.

As to the Association Littéraire Internationale, it had the usual provoking habit of French conventions, and met only at intervals of several days, — as if to give its delegates plenty of leisure to see Paris, — and I could attend no later meeting, although I was placed on the Executive Committee for America; but it has since held regular annual conventions in

different capitals, and has doubtless helped the general agitation for better copyright laws.

I went again to the apartments of Louis Blanc on July 14, with a young American friend, to get tickets for the Rousseau centenary, which was also to be, after the convenient French habit of combination, a celebration of the capture of the Bastille. Rousseau died July 2, 1778, and the Bastille was taken on July 14, 1789, so that neither date was strictly centennial, but nobody ever minds that in Paris; and if it had been proposed that our Declaration of Independence or the Landing of the Pilgrims should also be included in the festival, there would have been no trouble in any mind on account of the dates. Committee men were busy in Louis Blanc's little parlor, and this as noisily and eagerly as if the Bastille were again to be taken: they talked and gesticulated as only Latin races can; in fact, the smallest committee meeting in France is as full of excitement as a monster convention. It is a wonder that these people do not wear themselves out in youth; and yet old Frenchmen have usually such an unabated fire in their eyes, set off by gray hair and often black eyebrows, that they make Anglo-Saxons of the same age look heavy and dull in comparison. French emotion does not exhaust itself, but accumulates strength in-

definitely, needing only a touch of flame, at any age, to go off like a rocket.

Little Louis Blanc came in and went out, in a flowered dressing-gown; and he really seemed, after his long English residence, to be an element of calmness in the eager crowd. We obtained tickets for the evening banquet (Bastille celebration) at three and a half francs each, and also received cards for the afternoon (Rousseau celebration) free and with reserved seats. To prepare the mind for both occasions, I attended a very exclusive and aristocratic mass at the Chapelle Expiatoire, and, later, went by omnibus to the Cirque Américain, then existing in the Place du Château d'Eau. This was the place where the popular demonstration had been held on the Voltaire day; but I had not seen that, and it was, in case of Rousseau, the scene of the only daylight celebration. Crowds of people were passing in, all seemingly French; we did not hear a syllable of any other language. We were piloted to good seats, and found ourselves in the middle of enthusiastic groups, jumping up, sitting down, calling, beckoning, gesticulating, and talking aloud. There were soon more than six thousand persons in a hall which seated but four thousand, and the noise of this multitude was something to make one deaf. Every one seemed either looking for a

friend or making signals to one. Most of those present were neatly dressed, even those who wore blue blouses and white caps ; and all was good nature, except that now and then some man would make himself obnoxious and be put out, usually under the charge of being a Bonapartist sent there purposely to make trouble. At such times there would be a sudden roar, a waving of arms and sticks, amid which one could discern a human figure being passed along rapidly from hand to hand, and at last dropped, gently but firmly, over the stairway ; his hat being considerately jammed down upon his head during the process. Yet all was done as good-naturedly as such a summary process permits ; there was nothing that looked like rioting. Opposite the high tribune, or speaker's stand, was placed a bust of Rousseau, looking very white against a crimson velvet background ; five French flags were above it, and wreaths of violets and immortelles below, with this inscription, "Consacra sa vie à la vérité." Beside this were panels inscribed with the chief events of Rousseau's life.

When at last Louis Blanc came in with others — all towering above him — there was a great clapping of hands, and shouts of "Vive l'amnistie ! Vive la République ! Vive Louis Blanc !" The demand for amnesty referred to the pardon

of political prisoners, and was then one of the chief war-cries of the radical party of France. After the group of speakers there appeared a larger group of singers, — there had been a band present even earlier, — and then all said "Sh! sh! sh!" and there was absolute silence for the Marseillaise. Nothing of the kind in this world can be more impressive than the way in which an audience of six thousand French radicals receives that wonderful air. I observed that the group of young men who led the singing never once looked at the notes, and few even had any, so familiar was it to all. There was a perfect hush in that vast audience while the softer parts were sung, and no one joined even in the chorus at first, for everybody was listening. The instant, however, that the strain closed, the applause broke like a tropical storm, and the clapping of hands was like the taking flight of a thousand doves all over the vast arena. Behind those twinkling hands the light dresses of ladies and the blue blouses of workingmen seemed themselves to shimmer in the air; there was no coarse noise of pounding on the floor or drumming on the seats, but there was a vast cry of "Bis! Bis!" sent up from the whole multitude, demanding a repetition. When this was given, several thousand voices joined in the chorus; then the applause was

redoubled, as if the hearers had gathered new sympathy from one another; after which there was still one more great applauding gust, and then an absolute quiet as Louis Blanc arose.

It all brought home to me that brief and thrilling passage in Erckmann-Chatrian's story of "Madame Thérèse," where a regiment of French soldiers, having formed square, is being crushed in by assaults on all sides, when the colonel, sitting on his horse in the middle, takes off his chapeau and elevates it on the point of his sword, and then begins in a steady voice to chant a song. Instantly a new life appears to run through those bleeding and despairing ranks; one voice after another swells the chant, and the crushed sides of the square gradually straighten out under the strong inspiration, until it is all in shape again, and the regiment is saved. I could perfectly picture to myself that scene, while listening to this performance of the Marseillaise. Afterwards another air of the French Revolution was played by the band, the Chant du Départ, and this was received with almost equal ecstasy, and was indeed fine and stirring. There was also music of Rousseau's own composition, the first I had ever heard, and unexpectedly good. This was finely sung by two vocalists from the Théâtre Lyrique, and I was told that they were risking their appoint-

ments at that theatre by singing in an assembly so radical.

The speaking was eloquent and impressive, being by Louis Blanc, M. Marcou, and M. Hamel. All read their speeches, yet each so gesticulated with the hand and accompanied the action with the whole movement of the body that it seemed less like reading than like conversation. The orators were not so distinguished as at the Voltaire celebration, yet it was impossible to see and hear Louis Blanc without liking and trusting him, while he escaped wholly from that air of posing which was almost inseparable from Victor Hugo, and was, perhaps, made inevitable by the pedestal on which France had placed him so long. The audience on this occasion was three times as large as at Hugo's address, but the attention was as close and the appreciation almost as delicate. It seems impossible to bring together a French audience that has not an artistic sense. The applause, like the speaking, had always a certain intellectual quality about it; the things said might be extravagant or even truculent, yet they must be passed through the fine medium of the French tongue, and they were heard by French ears. Whenever there was the long swell of a sonorous sentence, the audience listened with hushed breath; and if

any one interrupted the cadence by premature applause, there came an almost angry "Sh! sh!" to postpone it. Once when this interruption was persistently made, my next neighbor exclaimed with fury, "C'est tr-r-rop de précipitation!" throwing himself forward and glaring at the unhappy marplot with an expression suggestive of guillotines; but when the interruption subsided and the sentence stood fulfilled, the reserved applause broke with accumulated power, like a breaking wave. The enthusiasm of a French radical audience is as wonderful as the self-control of its stillness, or as the sudden burst of vivacity let loose during all the intervals between the speeches. The whole affair lasted from two o'clock until nearly six, and during the last hour or two of the time I found myself steadily losing that disentangling power which one must use in comprehending the sentences of a foreign language; the faculty became, as it were, benumbed in me, and the torrent of speech simply flowed by without reaching the brain; it was much the same, I found, with my two young companions. Yet Louis Blanc was of all Frenchmen I had ever met the easiest to follow, — a thing the more remarkable as his brother, Charles Blanc, the well-known art critic, was one of the most difficult.

The evening banquet in memory of the destruction of the Bastille was to take place at half past seven in a café in the Rue de Belleville, near the city barriers. As we went toward the place, we found ourselves in an absolutely French region. There was no more "English spoken" in the shop windows; the people around us were natives or residents, not lookers-on; there was an air of holiday; and there were children not a few, including even babies tightly swathed. As we toiled up the long hill, we found ourselves approaching the very outskirts of Paris; and when we entered the hall, there must have been five hundred persons already seated, among whom we were perhaps the only Anglo-Saxons. The men and women around us were about equal in number, and were all neatly, sometimes fashionably dressed. Two men opposite us had an especially cultivated look, and soon encouraged some conversation. At first they took us for English, but were obviously pleased to hear that we were Americans, and then as visibly disappointed at learning, on inquiry, that neither of us belonged to the masonic order, with which European radicals claim a certain affinity. They drank their claret to the République Américaine, but when I proposed the République Française they shook their heads quite

sadly, and pronounced that to be a widely different thing. This, it must be remembered, was nearly twenty years ago, when the sense of uncertainty was far greater than it is now, and when the policy of the administration was thought very reactionary.

There was a surprisingly good banquet for the money, — when it comes to cooking, Frenchmen of all parties make much the same demands, — but there were too few waiters and the courses came very slowly, so that when we left the hall, at ten o'clock, the guests had got no farther than chicken. Perhaps it was one result of this that the speaking took place as the dinner went on, instead of waiting for the cigars, as with us. I cannot recall the names of the orators, except General Wimpffen, a man of veteran and soldierly appearance, who was received with great enthusiasm, the French army, since the Commune, being regarded as on the conservative side. A peculiarly cordial greeting was given to a lady who read extracts from letters ; such a spectacle being then rare, I was told, at French public meetings. The speakers captured and destroyed the Bastille with great repetition and unanimously, and some of the talk was entirely without notes and quite eloquent. At intervals the band would strike in with tremendous force, especially in the direc-

tion of the Marseillaise, the guests all joining in the chorus, with their mouths full and with a great thumping of knife-handles on the table. One of my young companions pointed out that the gleam of the blades during this last performance was the only thing which made a red republic seem a possibility.

The nearest approach to a disturbance was provoked by a man who utterly refused to keep still during the speeches, and gave forth awful vociferations. At first all thought him a Bonapartist who had come in to make trouble, and they were going to put him out by main force. He succeeded, however, in explaining that he did not aim at a revolution, but at his dinner; the waiters having repeatedly passed him by, he said, so that he had had nothing to eat. Then all sympathy turned at once eagerly in his favor, for he had touched a national chord, and one appealing to radical and conservative alike, the world over; so he was fed profusely at last, and all was peace.

# XI

## ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PUBLIC LIFE

Living in a university city, I am occasionally asked by students how they can best train themselves for public speaking; and I always begin with one bit of counsel, based on half a century's experience: "Enlist in a reform." Engage in something which you feel for the moment to be so unspeakably more important than yourself as wholly to dwarf you, and the rest will come. No matter what it is, — tariff or free trade, gold standard or silver, even communism or imperialism, — the result is the same as to oratory, if you are only sincere. Even the actor on the dramatic stage must fill himself with his part, or he is nothing, and the public speaker on the platform must be more than a dramatic actor to produce the highest effects. When the leading debater in an intercollegiate competition told me, the other day, that he did not believe in the cause which he was assigned to advocate, my heart sank for him, and I dimly foresaw the defeat which came. There is an essential thing wanting to

the eloquence of the men who act a part; but given a profound sincerity, and there is something wonderful in the way it overcomes the obstacles of a hoarse voice, a stammering tongue, or a feeble presence.

On the anti-slavery platform, where I was reared, I cannot remember one really poor speaker; as Emerson said, "eloquence was dog-cheap" there. The cause was too real, too vital, too immediately pressing upon heart and conscience, for the speaking to be otherwise than alive. It carried men away as with a flood. Fame is never wide or retentive enough to preserve the names of more than two or three leaders: Bright and Cobden in the anti-corn-law movement; Clarkson and Wilberforce in that which carried West India Emancipation; Garrison, Phillips, and John Brown in the great American agitation. But there were constantly to be heard in anti-slavery meetings such minor speakers as Parker, Douglass, William Henry Channing, Burleigh, Foster, May, Remond, Pillsbury, Lucretia Mott, Abby Kelley, — each one holding the audience, each one making converts. How could eloquence not be present there, when we had not time to think of eloquence? — as Clarkson under similar circumstances said that he had not time to think of the welfare of his soul. I know that

my own teachers were the slave women who came shyly before the audience, women perhaps as white as my own sisters, — Ellen Craft was quite as white, — women who had been stripped and whipped and handled with insolent hands and sold to the highest bidder as unhesitatingly as the little girl whom I had seen in the St. Louis slave-market; or women who, having once escaped, had, like Harriet Tubman, gone back again and again into the land of bondage to bring away their kindred and friends. My teachers were men whom I saw first walking clumsily across the platform, just arrived from the South, as if they still bore a hundred pounds weight of plantation soil on each ankle, and whom I saw develop in the course of years into the dignity of freedom. What were the tricks of oratory in the face of men and women like these? We learned to speak because their presence made silence impossible.

All this, however, I did not recognize at the time so clearly as I do now; nor was I sure that I, at least, was accomplishing much for the cause I loved. In one respect the influence of Wendell Phillips did me harm for a time, as to speaking in public, because it was his firm belief that the two departments of literature and oratory were essentially distinct, and could not well be combined in the same person. He

had made his choice, he said, and had abandoned literature. It was hard to persuade him to write even a pamphlet or a circular, although when he did it was done with such terseness and vigor as to refute his theory. Of this I was gradually convinced, but there was a long period during which I accepted the alternative offered by him, and therefore reasoned that because literature was my apparent vocation, oratory was not. Of course it was often necessary for me to appear on the platform, but I did it at first only as a duty, and did not feel sure of myself in that sphere. Little by little the impression passed away, and I rejected Phillips's doctrine. Since the civil war, especially, I have felt much more self-confidence in public speaking; and it is one sign of this that I have scarcely ever used notes before an audience, and have long since reached the point where they would be a hindrance, not a help. Indeed, I believe that most young speakers can reach this point much earlier than they suppose; and in my little book, "Hints on Writing and Speech-making," I have indicated how this can be done. A speaker's magnetic hold upon his audience is unquestionably impaired by the sight of the smallest bit of paper in his hand.

During a long intervening period, however, I

lectured a great deal in what were then called "lyceum" courses, which stretched over the northern half of the United States, forty years ago, to an extent now hardly conceivable. There were two or three large organizations, or bureaus, which undertook systematically the task of bringing speaker and audience together, with the least possible inconvenience to both. One of these, whose centre was Dubuque, Iowa, negotiated in 1867 for thirty-five lecturers and one hundred and ten lecture courses; undertaking to distribute the one with perfect precision, and to supply the other. As a result, the lecturer left home with a printed circular in his pocket, assigning his dozen or his hundred engagements, as the case might be. Many of these might be in towns of which he had never heard the names. No matter; he was sure that they would be there, posted a day's journey apart, and all ready to receive him. As a rule, he would meet in each new place what looked like the same audience, would make the same points in his lecture as before, would sleep at what seemed the same hotel, and breakfast on the same tough beefsteak. He would receive the usual compliments, if any, and make the same courteous reply to the accustomed questions as to the acoustics of the hall and the intelligence of the

audience. In the far West he would perhaps reach villages where, as the people came twenty miles for their entertainments, a dance might be combined with the lecture, — "tickets to Emerson and ball, one dollar." I have still a handbill, printed in some village in Indiana in 1867, wherein Mr. J. Jackson offers to read "Hamlet" for twenty-five cents admission, ladies free. He adds that after the reading he will himself plan for the formation of a company, with a small capital, for the manufacture of silk handkerchiefs of a quality superior to anything in the market, and will relate some incidents of his early life in connection with this particular article. Thus having administered Hamlet once, he would prepare his audience to shed the necessary tears on a second hearing.

To the literary man, ordinarily kept at home by task work or by domestic cares, — and both of these existed in my own case, — there was a refreshing variety in a week or two, possibly a month or more, of these lecturing experiences. Considered as a regular vocation, such lecturing was benumbing to the mind as well as exhausting to the body, but it was at any rate an antidote for provincialism. It was a good thing to be entertained beyond the Mississippi, at a house which was little more than a log cabin, and to find, as I have found, Longfel-

low's Dante on the table and Millais' Huguenot Lovers on the wall; or to visit, as I once visited, a village of forty houses, in the same region, in nineteen of which the "Atlantic Monthly" was regularly taken. After such experiences a man could go back to his writing or his editing with enlarged faith. He would get new impressions, too, of the dignity and value of the lecture system itself. In one of my trips, while on a small branch railway in New England, I found everybody talking about the prospective entertainment of that evening, — conductor, brakemen, and passengers all kept recurring to the subject; everybody was going. As we drew near the end, the conductor singled me out as the only stranger and the probable lecturer, and burst into eager explanation. "The president of the lyceum," he said, "is absent from the village, and the vice-president, who will present you to the audience, is the engineer of this very train." So it turned out: the engineer introduced me with dignity and propriety; he proved to be a reader of Emerson and Carlyle, and he gave me a ride homeward on his locomotive the next morning.

There was something pleasant, also, in the knowledge that the lecturer himself met the people as man to man; that he stood upon the platform to be judged and weighed. From

the talk of his fellow travelers in the train, beforehand, he could know what they expected of him; and from the talk next morning, how he had stood the test. Wendell Phillips especially dreaded this last ordeal, and always went home after lecturing, if his home could by any possibility be reached that night, in order to avoid it. The lecturer, often unrecognized in his traveling garb, might look through the eyes of others on his own face and figure; might hear his attitudes discussed, or his voice, or his opinions. Once, after giving a lecture on physical education, I heard it talked over between two respectable ladies, with especial reference to some disrespectful remarks of mine on the American pie. I had said, in a sentence which, though I had not really reduced it to writing, yet secured a greater circulation through the newspapers than any other sentence I shall ever write, that the average pie of the American railway station was "something very white and indigestible at the top, very moist and indigestible at the bottom, and with untold horrors in the middle." I had given this lecture at Fall River, and was returning by way of the steamboat to Providence, when I heard one of my neighbors ask the other if she heard the lecture.

"No," she answered, "I did n't. But Mis'

Jones, she come home that night, and she flung her hood right down on the table, and says she, 'There,' says she, 'Mr. Jones, I 'm never goin' to have another o' them mince pies in the house just as long as I live,' says she. 'There was Sammy,' says she, 'he was sick all last night, and I do believe it was nothin' in all the world but just them mince pies,' says she."

"Well," said the other lady, a slow, deliberate personage, "I do suppose that them kind of concomitants ain't good things."

Here the conversation closed, but Mr. Weller did not feel more gratified when he heard the Bath footmen call a boiled leg of mutton a "swarry," and wondered what they would call a roast one, than I when my poor stock of phrases was reinforced by this unexpected polysyllable. Instead of wasting so many words to describe an American railway pie, I should have described it, more tersely, as a "concomitant."

The lecture system was long since shaken to pieces in America by the multiplying of newspapers and the growth of musical and dramatic opportunities. The "bureaus" now exist mainly for the benefit of foreign celebrities; and the American lecturer has come to concern himself more and more with questions of public policy and morals, while literature and sci-

ence have receded more into the background. The transition was easy from the lyceum course to the political platform, and this, at least, has held its own. No delusion is harder to drive out of the public mind than the impression that college-bred American men habitually avoid public duties. It may hold in a few large cities, but is rarely the case in country towns, and in New England generally is quite untrue. In looking back fifty years, I cannot put my finger on five years when I myself was not performing some official service for the city or state, or both simultaneously. In each of the four places where I have resided I have been a member of some public school committee; and in three of these places a trustee of the public library, there being then no such institution in the fourth town, although I was on a committee to prepare for one.

As to service to the commonwealth, since my return to my native state — twenty years ago — I have spent thirteen years in some public function, one year as chief of the governor's personal staff, two years as member of the state House of Representatives, three years on the state Board of Education, and seven years as state military and naval historian. How well I did my duty is not the question; we are dealing with quantity of service, not quality. Be-

sides all this, I have almost invariably voted when there was any voting to be done, have repeatedly been a delegate to political conventions, and have usually attended what are called primary meetings, often presiding at them. There is nothing exceptional in all this; it is a common thing for American citizens to have rendered as much service as is here stated, and in the university city where I dwell it is the rule, and not the exception, for professors and instructors to take their share in public duties. Some of those most faithful in this respect have been among the most typical and fastidious scholars, such as Professor Charles Eliot Norton and the late Professor Francis James Child. I confess that it makes me somewhat indignant to hear such men stigmatized as mere idealists and dilettantes by politicians who have never in all their lives done so much to purify and elevate politics as these men have been doing daily for many years.

Side by side with this delusion there is an impression, equally mistaken, that college-bred men are disliked in politics, and have to encounter prejudice and distrust, simply by reason of education. They do indeed encounter this prejudice, but it comes almost wholly from other educated men who think that they can make a point against rivals by appealing to some such feeling.

Nobody used this weapon more freely, for instance, than the late General B. F. Butler, who was himself a college graduate. He was always ready to deride Governor John D. Long for having translated Virgil; while his audiences, if let alone, would have thought it a creditable performance. As a rule, it may be assumed that any jeer at a "scholar in politics" proceeds from some other scholar in politics. It was almost pathetic to me to see, while in the Massachusetts legislature, the undue respect and expectation with which the more studious men in that body were habitually treated by other members, who perhaps knew far more than they about the matters of practical business with which legislatures are mainly occupied. It was, if analyzed, a tribute to a supposed breadth of mind which did not always exist, or to a command of language which proved quite inadequate. Many a college graduate stammers and repeats himself, while a man from the anvil or the country store says what he has to say and sits down. Again and again, during my service in the legislature, when some member had been sent there by his town, mainly to get one thing done, — a boundary changed or a local railway chartered, — he has come to me with an urgent request to make his speech for him; and I have tried to convince him of the universal truth

that a single-speech man who has never before opened his lips, but who understands his question through and through, will be to other members a welcome relief from a voice they hear too often. Wordsworth says: —

> "I 've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
> With coldness still returning;
> Alas! the gratitude of men
> Hath oftener left me mourning."

I have much oftener been saddened by the too great deference of men who were my superiors in everything but a diploma than I have been amazed by their jealousy or distrust.

It is my firm conviction that there never was an honester body of men, on the whole, than the two Massachusetts legislatures with which I served in 1880 and 1881. If there has been a serious change since, which I do not believe, it has been a very rapid decline. Doubtless the legislature was extremely liable to prejudice and impatience; it required tact to take it at the right moment, and also not to bore it. I had next me, for a whole winter, a politician of foreign birth, so restless that he never could remain half an hour in his seat, and who took such an aversion to one of the ablest lawyers in the house, because of his long and frequent speeches, that he made it a rule to go out whenever this orator began, and to vote against every motion he made. This

was an individual case; yet personal popularity certainly counted for a great deal, up to the moment when any man trespassed upon it and showed that his head was beginning to be turned; from that moment his advantage was gone. Men attempting to bully the House usually failed; so did those who were too visibly wheedling and coaxing, or who struck an unfair blow at an opponent, or who aspersed the general integrity of the body they addressed, or who even talked down to it too much. On the other hand, there existed among the members certain vast and inscrutable undercurrents of prejudice; as, for instance, those relating to the rights of towns, or the public school system, or the law of settlement, or perhaps only questions of roads and navigable streams, or of the breadth of wheels or the close time of fishing, — points which could never be quite appreciated by academic minds or even city-bred minds, and which yet might at any moment create a current formidable to encounter, and usually impossible to resist. Every good debater in the House and every one of its recognized legal authorities might be on one side, and yet the smallest contest with one of these latent prejudices would land them in a minority.

There were men in the House who scarcely ever spoke, but who comprehended these pre-

judices through and through; and when I had a pet measure to support, I felt more alarmed at seeing one of these men passing quietly about among the seats, or even conversing with a group in the cloak-room, than if I had found all the leaders in the legislature opposed to me. Votes were often carried against the leaders, but almost never against this deadly undertow of awakened prejudice. No money could possibly have affected it; and indeed the attempt to use money to control the legislature must then have been a very rare thing. There was not then, and perhaps is not to this day, any organized corporation which had such a controlling influence in Massachusetts as have certain railways, according to rumor, in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. Something of this power has been attributed, since my time, perhaps without reason, to the great West End Railway; but there was certainly only one man in the legislature, at the time I describe, who was generally believed to be the agent of a powerful corporation; and although he was one of the most formidable debaters in the house, by reason of wit and brilliancy, he yet failed to carry votes through this general distrust. Men in such bodies often listen eagerly, for entertainment, to an orator who commands after all but few votes, while they are perhaps finally con-

vinced, nevertheless, by some dull or stammering speaker who thoroughly comprehends what he is discussing and whose sincerity is recognized by all.

Perhaps the most tedious but often the most amusing part of legislative life consists in the hearings before committees. I was at different times House chairman of committees on constitutional amendments, on education, on woman suffrage, and on "expediting the business of the House." All these were liable to be the prey of what are called cranks, but especially the first of these, which gathered what Emerson once called "the soul of the soldiery of dissent." There were men and women who haunted the State House simply to address the sessions of the Committee on Constitutional Amendments, and who would have been perfectly ready to take all that part of the business off our hands. I find in my notebook that one of these, an Irishman, once said to us, with the headlong enthusiasm of his race, "Before I say anything on this subject, let me say a word or two! In a question of integral calculus, you must depend on some one who can solve it. Now I have solved this question of Biennial Sessions," this being the subject under consideration, "and you must depend on me. Working men, as a rule, have what may be called a moral

sense. Moral sense is that which enables us to tell heat from cold, to tell white from yellow: that is moral sense. Moral sense tells us right from wrong." Then followed an address with more of fact and reasoning than one could possibly associate with such an introduction, but ending with the general conclusion, "It [the biennial method] would give more power to the legislature, for they would centralize more money into their pockets. I hope every member of the legislature, when this matter comes up, will be voted down." All these flowers of speech are taken from my own notebook as kept in the committee.

I always rather enjoyed being contradicted in the legislature or being cross-examined on the witness-stand; first, because the position gives one opportunity to bring in, by way of rejoinder, points which would not have fitted legitimately into one's main statement, thus approaching the matter by a flank movement, as it were; and again because the sympathy of the audience is always with the party attacked, and nothing pleases the spectators better, especially in the court-room, then to have a witness turn the tables on the lawyer. It is much the same in legislative bodies, and nothing aided the late General Butler more than the ready wit with which he would baffle the whole weight of argu-

ment by a retort. The same quality belonged to the best rough-and-ready fighter in the Massachusetts legislature of 1881, — a man to whom I have already referred as lacking the confidence of the House. He was a man who often hurt the cause he advocated by the brutality of his own argument, and was never so formidable as when he was driven into a corner, and suddenly, so to speak, threw a somerset over his assailant's head and came up smiling. I remember to have been once the victim of this method when I felt safest. I was arguing against one of those bills which were constantly reappearing for the prohibition of oleomargarine, and which usually passed in the end, from a sheer desire to content the farmers. I was arguing — what I have always thought to this day — that good oleomargarine was far better than bad butter, and should not be prohibited; and I fortified this by a story I had just heard of a gentleman in New York city, who had introduced the substitute without explanation at a lunch he had lately given, and who, on asking his guests to compare it with the best butter, also on the table, found them all selecting the oleomargarine. The House had seemed about equally divided, and I thought my little anecdote had carried the day, when Mr. —— arose and with the profoundest seriousness asked, "Will

the gentleman kindly inform us at what precise stage of the lunch party this test was applied ?" The retort brought down the house instantly, and the rout which followed was overwhelming. It readily occurred to the experienced, or even to the inexperienced, that at a convivial party in New York there might arrive a period when the judgment of the guests would lose some of its value.

I had, in the legislature, my fair share of successes and failures, having the pleasure, for instance, of reporting and carrying through the present law which guarantees children in public schools from being compelled to read from the Bible against the wish of their parents, and also the bill giving to the Normal Art School a dwelling-place of its own. I contributed largely, the reporters thought, to the defeat of a measure which my constituents generally approved, the substitution of biennial sessions for annual; and have lived to see it finally carried through the legislature, and overwhelmingly defeated by the popular vote. I supported many propositions which required time to mature them and have since become laws; as the abolition of the poll tax qualification for voting, and the final effacement of the school district system. Other such measures which I supported still require farther time for agitation, as woman suffrage

and the removal of the stigma on atheist witnesses. The latter, as well as the former, was very near my heart, since I think it an outrage first to admit the evidence of atheists, and then admit evidence to show that they are such, — a contradiction which Professor Longfellow described as "allowing men to testify, and then telling the jury that their testimony was not worth having." This measure was defeated, not by the Roman Catholics in the House, but by the Protestants, the representatives of the former being equally divided; a result attributed mainly to my having a certain personal popularity among that class. A more curious result of the same thing was when the woman suffrage bill was defeated, and when four Irish-American members went out and sat in the lobby, — beside Mr. Plunkett, the armless sergeant-at-arms, who told me the fact afterwards, — not wishing either to vote for the bill or to vote against what I desired. I rejoice to say that I had the same experience described by Theodore Roosevelt, in finding my general liking for the Irish temperament confirmed by seeing men of that race in public bodies. Often unreasonable, impetuous, one-sided, or scheming, they produce certainly some men of a high type of character. There was no one in the legislature for whose motives and habits of mind

I had more entire respect than for those of a young Irish-American lawyer, since dead, who sat in the next seat to mine during a whole session. I believe that the instinct of this whole class for politics is on the whole a sign of promise, although producing some temporary evils; and that it is much more hopeful, for instance, than the comparative indifference to public affairs among our large French-Canadian population.

The desire for office, once partially gratified, soon becomes very strong, and the pride of being known as a "vote-getter" is a very potent stimulus to Americans, and is very demoralizing. Few men are willing to let the offices come to them, and although they respect this quality of abstinence in another, if combined with success, they do not have the same feeling for it *per se*. They early glide into the habit of regarding office as a perquisite, and as something to be given to the man who works hardest for it, not to the man who is best fitted for it. Money too necessarily enters into the account, as is shown by the habit of assessing candidates in proportion to their salaries — a thing to which I have always refused to submit. Again, I am sorry to say, there is a certain amount of hypocrisy on the subject, and men often carry on a still hunt, as it is tech-

nically called, and do not frankly own their methods. I remember when, some thirty years ago, a man eminent in our public life was boasting to me of the nomination of his younger brother for Congress, and this especially on the ground that whereas his competitor for the nomination had gone about promising offices and other rewards to his henchmen, the successful candidate had entirely refused to do anything of the kind, and had won on his merits alone. Afterward, on my asking the manager of the latter's campaign whether there was really so much difference in the methods of the two, he said with a chuckle, "Well, I guess there was n't much left undone on either side." The whole tendency of public life is undoubtedly to make a man an incipient boss, and to tempt him to scheme and bargain; and it is only the most favorable circumstances which can enable a man to succeed without this; it is mainly a question whether he shall do it in person, or through an agent or "wicked partner." The knowledge of this drives from public life some men well fitted to adorn it, and brings in many who are unfit. The only question is whether there is much variation in this respect between different countries, and whether the process by which a man gets promotion in England, for instance, differs always essentially

from the method by which position is gained in American public life. It is my own impression that this is also a case where there is not much left undone on either side.

Here is one plain advantage in the hands of the literary man: that he lives mainly in a world where these various devices are far less needful. The artist, said Goethe, is the only man who lives with unconcealed aims. Successes are often won by inferior productions, no doubt, but it is because these are in some way better fitted to the current taste, and it is very rarely intrigue or pushing which secures fame. It is rare to see a book which succeeds mainly through business strategy; and if such a case occurs, it is very apt to be only a temporary affair, followed by reaction. This, therefore, is an advantage on the side of literature; but, on the other hand, the direct contact with men and the sense of being uncloistered is always a source of enjoyment in public life, and I should be sorry to go altogether without it. Presiding at public meetings, for instance, is a position which affords positive enjoyment to any one to whom it comes easily; it demands chiefly a clear head, prompt decision, absolute impartiality, and tolerable tact. An audience which recognizes these qualities will almost invariably sustain the chairman; those present

have usually come there for a certain purpose, to carry the meeting fairly through, and they will stand by a man who helps to this, though if he is tricky they will rebel, and if he is irresolute they will ride over him. The rules of order are really very simple, and are almost always based on good common sense; and there is the same sort of pleasure in managing a somewhat turbulent meeting that is found in driving a four-in-hand. At smaller meetings of committees and the like, an enormous amount can be done by conciliation; nine times out of ten the differences are essentially verbal, and the suggestion of a word, the substitution of a syllable, will perhaps quell the rising storm. People are sometimes much less divided in purpose than they suppose themselves to be, and an extremely small concession will furnish a sufficient relief for pride. There is much, also, in watching the temper of those with whom you deal and in choosing the fortunate moment, — a thing which the late President Garfield, while leader of the House of Representatives at Washington, pointed out to me as the first essential of success. There were days, he said, when one could carry through, almost without opposition, measures that at other times would have to be fought inch by inch; and I afterwards noticed the same thing

in the Massachusetts legislature. It is so, also, I have heard the attendants say, even with the wild beasts in a menagerie: there are occasions when the storm signals are raised, and no risks must be taken, even with the tamest.

Probably no other presidential election which ever took place in this country showed so small a share of what is base or selfish in politics as the first election of President Cleveland; and in this I happened to take a pretty active part. I was concerned in his original nomination and afterwards spoke in his behalf in five different states, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, and New Jersey, and was brought closely in contact with the current of popular feeling, which I found a sound and wholesome one. The fact that he was a new man kept him singularly free from personal entanglements until actually in office; and his rather deliberate and stubborn temperament, with the tone of his leading supporters, gave an added safeguard. On the other hand, the same slowness of temperament made it impossible for him to supervise all departments at once, and he had to leave some of them in the hands of old-fashioned spoilsmen. There was among those who originally brought him forward — the so-called Mugwumps — an almost exag-

gerated unselfishness, at least for a time; in Massachusetts, especially, it was practically understood among them that they were to ask for nothing personally; and they generally got what they asked for. Mr. Cleveland's administration, with all its strength and weakness, has gone into history; he had, if ever a man had, *les défauts de ses qualités*, but I cannot remember any President whose support implied so little that was personally unsatisfactory. This I say although I was led by my interest in him to accept, rather against my will, a nomination for Congress on the Democratic ticket at the time when Mr. Cleveland failed of reëlection (1888). I made many speeches in my own district, mainly in his behalf; and although I was defeated, I had what is regarded in politics as the creditable outcome of having more votes in the district than the head of the ticket.

There are always many curious experiences in campaign-speaking. It will sometimes happen that the orators who are to meet on the platform have approached the matter from wholly different points of view, so that each makes concessions which logically destroy the other's arguments, were the audience only quick enough to find it out; or it may happen — which is worse — that the first speaker antici-

pates the second so completely as to leave him little to say. It is universally the case, I believe, that toward the end of the campaign every good point made by any speaker, every telling anecdote, every neat repartee, is so quoted from one to another that the speeches grow more and more identical. One gets acquainted, too, with a variety of prejudices, and gains insight into many local peculiarities and even accents. I remember that once, when I was speaking on the same platform with an able young Irish lawyer, he was making an attack on the present Senator Lodge, and said contemptuously, "Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge of Nâhânt" — and he paused for a response which did not adequately follow. Then he repeated more emphatically, "Of Nâhânt! He calls it in that way, but common people say Năhănt!" Then the audience took the point, and, being largely Irish, responded enthusiastically. Now, Mr. Lodge had only pronounced the name of his place of residence as he had done from the cradle, as his parents had said it before him, and as all good Bostonians had habitually pronounced it, with the broad sound that is universal among Englishmen, except — as Mr. Thomas Hardy has lately assured me — in the Wessex region; while this sarcastic young political critic, on the other hand, representing

the Western and Southern and Irish mode of speech, treated this tradition of boyhood as a mere bit of affectation.

One forms unexpected judgments of characters, also, on the platform. I can remember one well-known lawyer, — not now living, — with whom I was at several times associated, and whose manner to an audience, as to a jury, was so intolerably coaxing, flattering, and wheedling that it always left me with a strong wish that I could conscientiously vote against him. I remember also one eminent clergyman and popular orator who spoke with me before a very rough audience at Jersey City, and who so lowered himself by his tone on the platform, making allusions and repartees so coarse, that I hoped I might never have to speak beside him again. Of all the speakers with whom I have ever occupied the platform, the one with whom I found it pleasantest to be associated was the late Governor William Eustis Russell of Massachusetts. Carrying his election three successive times in a state where his party was distinctly in the minority, he yet had, among all political speakers whom I have ever heard, the greatest simplicity and directness of statement, the most entire absence of trick, of claptrap, or of anything which would have lowered him. Striking directly at the main line of

his argument, always well fortified, making his points uniformly clear, dealing sparingly in joke or anecdote, yet never failing to hold his audience, he was very near the ideal of a political speaker; nor has the death of any man in public life appeared so peculiar and irremediable a loss.

On the election of John Davis Long, now Secretary of the Navy, as governor of Massachusetts in 1880, he asked me to act on his military staff; and although I had not known him personally, I felt bound to accept the post. The position is commonly regarded in time of peace as merely ornamental, but I had learned during the civil war how important it might become at any moment; and as nearly all his staff had seen some actual service, I regarded the appointment as an honor. So peaceful was his administration that my chief duty was in representing him at public dinners and making speeches in his place. Sometimes, however, I went with him, and could admire in him that wondrous gift, which is called in other countries "the royal faculty," of always remembering the name of every one. With the utmost good will toward the human race, I never could attain to this gift of vivid personal recollection, and could only admire in my chief the unerring precision with which he knew in each

case whether it was his constituent's wife or grandaunt who had been suffering under chronic rheumatism last year, and who must now be asked for with accuracy. He had, too, the greatest tact in dealing with his audiences, not merely through humor and genial good sense, but even to the point of risking all upon some little stroke of audacity. This happened, for instance, when he delighted the Ancient and Honorable Artillery, a body made up from various military and non-military ingredients, by complimenting them on their style of marching, —which was rarely complimented by others,— and this on the ground that he did "not remember ever to have seen just such marching." The shot told, and was received with cheer upon cheer. Almost the only mistake I ever knew this deservedly popular official to make in dealing with an audience was when he repeated the same stroke soon after upon a rural semi-military company of somewhat similar description, which received it in stern and unsympathetic silence; for it was their marching upon which these excellent citizens had, perhaps mistakenly, prided themselves the most.

The Nemesis of public speaking — the thing which makes it seem almost worthless in the long run — is the impossibility of making it tell for anything after its moment is past.

A book remains always in existence, — *litera scripta manet*, — and long after it seems forgotten it may be disinterred from the dust of libraries, and be judged as freshly as if written yesterday. The popular orator soon disappears from memory, and there is perhaps substituted in his place some solid thinker like Burke, who made speeches, indeed, but was called "the Dinner Bell," because the members of Parliament scattered themselves instead of listening when he rose. Possibly this briefer tenure of fame is nature's compensation for the more thrilling excitement of the orator's life as compared with the author's. The poet's eye may be in never so fine a frenzy rolling, but he enjoys himself alone; he can never wholly trust his own judgment, nor even that of his admiring family. A perceptible interval must pass before he hears from his public. The orator's appreciation, on the other hand, comes back as promptly as an answering echo: his hearers sometimes hardly wait for his sentence to be ended. In this respect he is like the actor, and enjoys, like him, a life too exciting to be quite wholesome. There are moments when every orator speaks, as we may say, above himself. Either he waked that morning fresher and more vigorous than usual, or he has had good news, or the audience is particularly sym-

pathetic; at any rate, he surprises himself by going beyond his accustomed range. Or it may be, on the other hand, that he has heard bad news, or the audience is particularly antagonistic, so that he gets the warmth by reaction, as from a cold bath. When Wendell Phillips was speaking more tamely than usual, the younger Abolitionists would sometimes go round behind the audience and start a hiss, which roused him without fail. The most experienced public speaker can never fully allow for these variations, or foretell with precision what his success is to be. No doubt there may be for all grades of intellect something akin to inspiration, when it is the ardor of the blood which speaks, and the orator himself seems merely to listen. Probably a scolding fishwoman has her days of glory when she is in remarkably good form, and looks back afterward in astonishment at her own flow of language. Whatever surprises the speaker is almost equally sure to arrest the audience; his prepared material may miss its effect, but his impulse rarely does. "Indeed," as I wrote elsewhere long ago, "the best hope that any orator can have is to rise at favored moments to some height of enthusiasm that shall make all his previous structure of preparation superfluous; as the ship in launching glides from the ways, and scatters cradle-

timbers and wedges upon the waters that are henceforth to be her home."

The moral of my whole tale is that while no man who is appointed by nature to literary service should forsake it for public life, yet the experience of the platform, and even of direct political service, will be most valuable to him up to a certain point. That neither of these avenues leads surely to fame or wealth is a wholly secondary matter. Gibbon says of himself that "in circumstances more indigent or more wealthy" he "should never have accomplished the task or acquired the fame of an historian." For myself, I have always been very grateful, first for not being rich, since wealth is a condition giving not merely new temptations, but new cares and responsibilities, such as a student should not be called upon to undertake; and secondly, for having always had the health and habits which enabled me to earn an honest living by literature, and this without actual drudgery. Drudgery in literature is not simply to work hard, which is a pleasure, but to work on unattractive material. If one escapes drudgery, it seems to me that he has in literature the most delightful of all pursuits, but especially if he can get the added variety that comes from having the immediate contact with life which occasional public speak-

ing gives. The writer obtains from such intercourse that which Selden, in his "Table Talk," attributes to the habit of dining in public as practiced by old English sovereigns: "The King himself used to eat in the hall, and his lords with him, and then he understood men." It is, after all, the orator, not the writer, who meets men literally face to face; beyond this their functions are much alike. Of course neither of them can expect to win the vast prizes of wealth or power which commerce sometimes gives; and one's best preparation is to have looked poverty and obscurity in the face in youth, to have taken its measure and accepted it as a possible alternative, — a thing insignificant to a man who has, or even thinks he has, a higher aim.

No single sentence, except a few of Emerson's, ever moved me so much in youth as did a passage translated in Mrs. Austen's "German Prose Writers" from Heinzelmann, an author of whom I never read another word: "Be and continue poor, young man, while others around you grow rich by fraud and disloyalty; be without place or power, while others beg their way upward; bear the pain of disappointed hopes, while others gain the accomplishment of theirs by flattery; forego the gracious pressure of the hand, for which others

cringe and crawl; wrap yourself in your own virtue, and seek a friend, and your daily bread. If you have, in such a course, grown gray with unblenched honor, bless God, and die." This should be learned by heart by every young man; but he should also temper it with the fine saying of Thoreau, that he "did not wish to practice self-denial unless it was quite necessary." In other words, a man should not be an ascetic for the sake of asceticism, but he should cheerfully accept that attitude if it proves to be for him the necessary path to true manhood. It is not worth while that he should live, like Spinoza, on five cents a day. It is worth while that he should be ready to do this, if needful, rather than to forego his appointed work, as Spinoza certainly did not. If I am glad of anything, it is that I learned in time, though not without some early stumblings, to adjust life to its actual conditions, and to find it richly worth living.

After all, no modern writer can state the relative position of author and orator, or the ultimate aims of each, better than it was done eighteen centuries ago in that fine dialogue which has been variously attributed to Quintilian and Tacitus, in which the representatives of the two vocations compare their experience. Both agree that the satisfaction of exercising

the gift and of knowing its usefulness to others provides better rewards than all office, all wealth. Aper, the representative orator, says that when he is called on to plead for the oppressed or for any good cause, he rises above all places of high preferment, and can afford to look down on them all. ("Tum mihi supra tribunatus et præturas et consulatus ascendere videor.") Maternus, who has retired from the public forum to write tragedies, justifies his course on the ground that the influence of the poet is far more lasting than that of the orator; and he is so far from asking wealth as a reward that he hopes to leave behind him, when he shall come to die, only so much of worldly possessions as may provide parting gifts for a few friends. ("Nec plus habeam quam quod possim cui velim relinquere.") If ancient Rome furnished this lofty standard, cannot modern Christendom hope at least to match it?

## EPILOGUE

In reading reminiscences like those contained in this volume, the public may often justly complain that too much has been told. The writer, on the other hand, when he comes to review what he has written, may be more justly amazed to see how large a portion of what is to him most important has remained unmentioned. Unless he has by nature the oppressive communicativeness of a French or Italian autobiographer, he will probably have left unchronicled the most intimate and essential parts of his own existence, — love, friendship, home, society, health, — while only that which is more overt and tangible remains in view. The frankest writer doubtless leaves untold more of the story of his life than he tells. For the rest, his career, be it larger or smaller, belongs to his own time; and its record is chiefly valuable for the light it throws on the period and the place.

It must be borne in mind that one who has habitually occupied the attitude of a reformer must inevitably have some satisfactions, at the

latter end of life, which those who are conservative by temperament can hardly share. To the latter, things commonly seem to be changing for the worse, and this habit of mind must be a dreary companion as the years advance. The reformer, on the other hand, sees so much already accomplished, in the direction of his desires, that he can await in some security the fulfillment of the rest. Personally I should like to live to see international arbitration secured, civil service reform completed, free trade established; to find the legal and educational rights of the two sexes equalized; to know that all cities are as honestly governed as that in which I dwell; to see natural monopolies owned by the public, not in private hands; to see drunkenness extirpated; to live under absolute as well as nominal religious freedom; to perceive American literature to be thoroughly emancipated from that habit of colonial deference which still hampers it. Yet it is something to believe it possible that, after the progress already made on the whole in these several directions, some future generation may see the fulfillment of what remains.

To those who were living when the American nation lifted and threw off from its shoulders the vast incubus of human slavery, what other task can seem too great to be accomplished?

In the presence of such a step in human progress as this, how trivial and unimportant are all personal ambitions! The high-water mark of earthly endeavor is not to be found in the pure love of science or art or literature, since these do not, at their utmost, include all the interests of man; nor in the wish to establish the glory of God, which needs no establishing; but it lies in aims so far-reaching that they exclude all petty personalities — in aims such as are expressed in George Eliot's "choir invisible," or in the sublime prayer of the French iconoclast, Proudhon, "Let my memory perish, if only humanity may be free."

# INDEX

# INDEX


Abbott, J. G., 128.
Abolitionists, the, 139.
About, Edmond, 313.
Adam, 139, 180.
Adams, C. F., 21, 52, 53, 137.
Adams, Hannah, 6.
Agassiz, Alexander, 283.
"Albion, The," 189.
Alcott, A. B., 117, 147, 158, 169, 173, 175, 181, 191.
Alexander the Great, 126.
Alford, Henry, 101.
Alger, W. R., 105.
Allston, Washington, 45.
American Reforms, largely of secular origin, 116.
Anderson, Mary, 287.
Andrew, J. A., 106, 243, 246, 247, 248.
Andrews and Stoddard, 21.
Andrews, Jane, 129.
Andromeda, 89.
Aper, a Roman orator, 361.
Aristophanes, 301.
Arnold, Matthew, 272, 282, 283.
Aspinwall, Augustus, 125.
Atchison, D. R., 213.
Athletic exercises, influence of, 59.
Atlantic Circle of Authors, the, 168, 187.
Atlantic Club, the, 172, 176.
Austin, Mrs. Sarah, 359.
Autobiography, Obstacles to, 1.
Autolycus, in "Winter's Tale," quoted, 64.
Avis, John, 234.

Bachi, Pietro, 17, 55.
Bacon, Sir Francis, 58.
Baker, Lovell, 164.
Baldwin, J. S., 248.
Bancroft, Aaron, 15.
Bancroft, George, 189.
Bancroft, Mrs. George, 282.
Banks, N. P., 237.
Barnard, Henry, 9.
Bartlett, Robert, 167, 190.
Bartol, C. A., 175.
Batchelder, Mr., 154, 155, 156, 157.
Batchelder, Mrs. F. L., 4.
Bearse, Andrew, 144, 148, 165.
Beatrice, 76.
Beck, Charles, 54.
Bede, Adam, 219.
Beethoven, Ludwig von, 18, 95.
Belot, Adolphe, 313.
Belton, W. S., 138.
Bem, Joseph, 86.
Bemis, George, 175.
Besant, Sir Walter, 273.
Bewick, John, 15.
Bigelow, Luther, 251.
Billings, Josh, 284.
Bird, F. W., 237.
Birth of a Literature, The, 167–195.
Bishop, W. H., 312, 314.
Blackstone, Sir William, 88.
Blake, Harrison, 181.
Blanc, Charles, 322.
Blanc, Louis, 304, 305, 309, 316, 317, 318, 320, 321, 322.
Boarding-schools, Dangers of, 22.
Boccaccio, Giovanni, 77.
Borel, General, 307.
Boswell, James, 15.
Bowditch, H. I., 176.
Bowditch, Nathaniel, 50.
Bowen, Francis, 53, 54.
Boyesen, H. H., 314.
Bremer, Fredrika, 101.
Brentano, Bettine, 25, 92, 93.
Briggs, the Misses, 119.
Bright, John, 327.
Brook Farm, 83, 84, 120.
Brookline, Mass., summer life in, 81.
Brown, Annie, 227.
Brown, Brownlee, 169.
Brown, C. B., 58.
Brown, John, 155, 196–234, 240, 242, 243, 246, 327.
Brown, Mrs. John, 227, 230.
Brown, Madox, 289.

Brown, Theophilus, 181.
Browning, Robert, 66, 67, 202, 235, 272, 286.
Brownson, Orestes, 97.
Bryce, James, 97.
Bull, Ole, 103.
Burke, Edmund, 109, 356.
Burleigh, C. C., 327.
Burleigh, Charles, 118.
Burlingame, Anson, 175.
Burney, Fanny, 15.
Burns, Anthony, 131, 157, 159, 162, 165, 166.
Burns, Robert, 276.
Butler, B. F., 337, 342.
Butman, A. O., 162, 163, 164, 165.
Byron, George Gordon, Lord, 15, 23.

Cabot, Edward, 9.
Cabot, George, 10.
Cabot, J. E., 105.
Cambridge Boyhood, A., 1–37.
Cambridge Churchyard, the, 32.
Cameron, Mr., 295.
Cameron, Mrs. J. M., 284, 295, 296.
Campbell, Thomas, 15.
Canning, George, 23.
Carlyle, Thomas, 77, 272, 278, 279, 280, 285, 296, 304, 332.
Carpenter, Mr., 233.
Carter, Charles P., 232.
Carter family, the, 75.
Cary, Alice, 134.
Cary, Phœbe, 134.
Cayley, Mr., 289.
Channing, Barbara, 83, 84.
Channing, E. T., 49, 52, 53, 57.
Channing, Ellery, 169, 174.
Channing, W. F., 159, 160, 176.
Channing, W. H., 43, 44, 97, 102, 114, 120, 175, 327.
Chapman, George, 95.
Chapman, J. J., 190.
Charles River, the, 96.
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 92.
Cheney, John, 176.
Child of the College, A, 38–68.
Child, F. J., 52, 53, 336.
Child, Mrs. Lydia Maria, 77, 102, 126.
Choules, J. O., 175.
Christ, Jesus, 118.
Church of the Disciples, the, 97.
Cicero, 171.
Cinderella, 253.
Civil War, The, 235–270.
Clapp, Henry, 85.
Claretie, Jules, 313.
Clarke, Edward, 62.
Clarke, J. F., 86, 97, 98, 244.
Clarkson, Thomas, 327.
Clay, Henry, 136.
Clemens, S. L. (Mark Twain), 284.
Cleveland, Grover, 350, 351.
Cobb, Governor, 214.
Cobden, Richard, 327.
Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice, 281.
Cogswell, J. G., 189.
Coleridge, S. T., 102, 104, 272.
Collins, J. A., 85.
Collins, William, 15.
"Colombe's Birthday" (Browning), 202.
Columbus, Christopher, 308.
Come-outers, the, 114.
Comte, Auguste, 101.
Confucius, 2.
Constant, Benjamin, 86.
Conway, M. D., 304, 309.
Conway, Mrs. M. D., 304.
Cooper, J. F., 41, 170, 187.
Copley, J. S., 79.
Courier, P. L., 80.
Cousin, Victor, 86, 101.
Craft, Ellen, 328.
Cranch, C. P., 18.
Crosby, Alpheus, 130.
Cudworth, Ralph, 101.
Curtin, Governor, 246.
Curtis, Burrill, 78, 83, 85.
Curtis, G. W., 78, 83, 84, 98.
Curtis, Mary (Story), 22.
Cushing, Caleb, 127.
Cutter, Calvin, 197.
Cuvier, Baron G. C. L. D. de, 251, 272.

Dana, C. A., 83, 84, 101.
Dana, R. H., 21, 53, 136, 137, 161.
Dante degli Alighieri, 76, 101, 289.
D'Arc, Jeanne, 301, 309.
D'Arlon, 29.
Darmesteter, Madame, 289.
Darwin, Charles, 194, 272, 283, 284, 285, 286, 292, 296.
Darwin, Mrs. Charles, 284.
Davis, C. H., 19.
Davis, Helen, 18.
Davis, Margaret, 37.
Demosthenes, 298.
De Quincey, Thomas, 102.
Deschanel, Emile, 301, 303.
Devens, Charles, 48, 74, 141, 247.
Devens, Mary, 74.
De Vere, Aubrey, 272.
"Dial, The," 114.
Dicey, Albert, 97.
Dickens, Charles, 187, 234.
Discharged convict, reform of, 191.
Dix, Dorothea L., 264.

Dobson, Susanna, 15.
Dombey, Paul, 187.
Douglas, S. A., 239.
Douglass, Frederick, 127, 173, 327.
Downes, Commodore, 142.
Doy, Doctor, 233.
Drew, Thomas, 156, 163.
Du Maurier, George, 289.
Durant, H. F., 63, 88.
Dwight, John, 18.

Edgeworth, Maria, 15.
"Eleanore," Tennyson's, 296.
Elizabeth, Queen, 7.
Ellis, A. J., 284.
Ellis, C. M., 142.
Emerson, R. W., 23, 36, 53, 67, 69, 77, 87, 91, 92, 95, 100, 111, 115, 118, 168, 169, 170, 171, 173, 174, 176, 180, 182, 185, 190, 204, 244, 272, 279, 297, 327, 331, 332, 341, 359.
Emigrant Aid Society, The, 196.
Epictetus, 270.
Epilogue, 362–364.
Erckmann-Chatrian, 320.
"Estray, The," 102.
Everett, Edward, 12, 79, 189.
Everett, Mrs. Edward, 12.

Fallersleben, Hoffmann von, 101.
Falstaff, quoted, 174.
Farlow, W. G., 59.
Farrar, Mrs. John, 90.
Faust, 244.
Fay, Maria, 34, 74, 75.
Fay, S. P. P., 75.
Fayal, Voyage from, 196.
Felton, C. C., 53, 54.
Fichte, J. G., 102.
Fields, J. T., 176, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 292.
Fillmore, Millard, 136.
Finnegan, General, 262.
Fiske, John, 58, 59.
Fitzgerald, Lord Edward, 66.
Fletcher, Andrew, of Saltoun, 183.
Follen, Charles, 16.
Forbes, Hugh, 220, 221, 222.
Foster, Abby Kelley, 146.
Foster, Dwight, 88.
Foster, S. S., 116, 146, 327.
Fourier, Charles, 101.
Francis, Convers, 100, 101.
Franklin, Benjamin, 16.
Free Church of Worcester, 146.
Freeman, Watson, 155.
Freiligrath, Ferdinand, 101.
French, J. H., 245.
Frithiof's Saga, 101.
Frothingham, O. B., 44, 105, 106, 175.
Froude, J. A., 272, 277, 278, 279.
Froude, Mrs. J. A., 277.
Fugitive Slave Epoch, The, 132–166.
Fugitive Slave Law, Passage of, 135.
Fuller, Margaret, 12, 77, 91, 92.

Gardner, Joseph, 233.
Garfield, J. A., 349.
Garibaldi, Giuseppe, 220.
Garrison, W. L., 97, 116, 125, 126, 127, 135, 139, 242, 327.
Gasparin, Madame de, 266.
Geary, J. W., 203, 205, 206.
German influence on American thought, 188.
Gibbon, Edward, 91, 358.
Giles, Henry, 175.
Gillmore, Q. A., 262.
Goethe, J. F. W. von, 15, 42, 194, 348.
Goodell, John, 251.
Goodhue, J. M., 247.
Gosse, Edmund, 289.
Graeme, Christie, 233.
Grandison, Sir Charles, 15.
Green, J. H., 102.
Greene, W. B., 107, 175.
Grenville, Tom, 166.
Grimes, Mr., 143.
Günderode, Caroline von, 92, 93.

Habersham, W. N., 18.
Haggard, Rider, 273.
Hale, E. E., 53, 175, 193, 194.
Hale family, the, 75.
Hall, A. O., 108.
Hall, Fitzedward, 53.
Hamel, M., 321.
Hanway, James, 208.
"Harbinger, The," 101.
Hardy, Thomas, 273, 352.
Harrington, Mrs., 86.
Harris, T. W., 56.
Harvard University in 1837, 44; improvements in morals and manners, 46; elective system at, 57.
Haven, Franklin, 176.
Hawkins, N., 217.
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 12, 158, 168, 170, 171, 176, 297, 315.
Hay, George, 55.
Hay, John, 219.
Hayden, Lewis, 140, 151, 155, 245.
Hazlett, Albert, 229, 231.
Hazlitt, William, 67.
Hedge, F. H., 53, 175.
Heine, Heinrich, 80, 90, 120.

Heinzelmann, 359.
"Heraud's Monthly Magazine," quoted, 167.
Herttell, Thomas, 116.
Hesiod, 92.
Higginson, Barbara, 80.
Higginson, F. J., 123.
Higginson, Francis, 4, 114, 130.
Higginson, John, 123.
Higginson, Louisa (Storrow), 8, 10, 34, 160.
Higginson, Louisa Susan, 101.
Higginson, Stephen, senior, 4; description of, by W. H. Channing, 43.
Higginson, Stephen, junior, 4.
Higginson, T. W., birth and home, 3; school days, 19; college life, 42; residence at Brookline, 81; favorite reading, 92, 102; love of natural history, 24, 194; first publications, 101, 102; post-collegiate study, 90; residence at Newburyport, 112, 127; interest in Woman's Rights, 120; early anti-slavery influences, 126; residence at Worcester, 130, 146; fugitive slave events, 139; speech at Tremont Temple, 142; editorial writing, 145; first magazine articles, 172; first contribution to "Atlantic Monthly," 171; perilous versatility, 182; "Young Folks' History of United States," 186; love of athletic exercises, 194; school committee work, 193; first book, 194; trip to Fayal, 196; visit to Kansas, 197; meeting with J. H. Lane, 203; intercourse with John Brown, 218; visit to his family, 226; attempt to rescue his confederates, 231; visit to a slave dealer's, 235; action during civil war, 245; enlistment, 248; transfer to South Carolina, 252; first military expedition, 259; "Army Life in a Black Regiment," 266; "Harvard Memorial Biographies," 270; "Epictetus," 270; "Malbone" and "Oldport Days," 270; residence in Newport, 270; visits to London, 271; to Paris, 298; public speaking, 326; public office, 335.
Higginson, Waldo, 73.
Hill, Thomas, 53, 105, 175.
Hillard, G. S., 53, 175.
Hinton, R. H., 215, 231.
Hoar, E. R., 170, 175.
Hoar, G. F., 162.
Hoffman, Wickham, 62.
Holmes, Abiel, 13.
Holmes, John, 16, 39, 42.
Holmes, O. W., 4, 13, 24, 31, 32, 53, 139, 154, 168, 171, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 182, 186.
Homer, 92, 101.
Hoole, John, 15.
Hopkins, Louisa (Stone), 129.
Horne, R. H., 112.
Horsford, E. N., 27.
Houghton, Lord, 2, 289, 294, 297.
Houghton, Mr., 34.
Howard, John, 5.
Howe, Julia Ward, 311.
Howe, S. G., 142, 148, 150, 159, 176, 215, 221, 246.
Howland, Joseph, 163.
Hughes, Thomas, 297.
Hugo, Victor, 298, 300, 301, 302, 303, 311, 313, 321.
Humboldt, Baron F. H. A. von, 272.
Hunter, David, 253, 256, 261, 262.
Huntin, A., 225.
Hurlbert (originally Hurlbut), W. H., 107, 109, 110, 111.
Hutchinson, Abby, 118, 119.
Huxley, T. H., 272, 285.

Irving, Washington, 12, 170, 187, 278.

Jackson, C. T., 157.
Jackson, J., 331.
James, Henry, senior, 175.
James, Henry, 117.
Jefferson, Thomas, 5, 10.
Jerrold, Blanchard, 312.
Johnson, Dr. Samuel, 15.
Johnson, Rev. Samuel, 105, 106.
Jones, Mr., 334.
Jones, Mrs., 334.
Jones, Sammy, 334.
Jonson, Ben, 3.
Jouffroy, T. S., 86.

Kansas and John Brown, 196–234.
Kant, Immanuel, 105.
Keats, John, 19, 67.
Keene, Charles, 290.
Kelley, Abby, 327.
Kemp, Mr., 148, 151.
Keppel, Augustus, 166.
King, Edward, 312.
King family, the, 75.
King, Mrs. Rufus, 17.

Kingsley, Charles, 107, 276.
Kirkland, J. T., 6.
Kraitsir, Charles, 86, 93.
Krummacher, F. A., 111.

Lamartine, A. M. L. de, 309, 310.
Lamennais, H. F. R., Abbé de, 92, 93, 160.
Lander, F. W., 264.
Lander, Jean M., Mrs., 264, 265.
Landor, W. S., 24, 101, 112, 298.
Lane, G. M., 53.
Lane, J. H., 203, 204, 207, 208, 219, 230.
Lang, Andrew, 273.
Lanier, Sidney, 230.
Laplace, Marquis de, 50, 51.
Larned, Mr., 83.
Laura, 76.
Lazarus, Emma, 314.
Le Barnes, J. W., 231, 232, 240.
Lee, Mrs. Thomas, 87.
Leighton, Caroline (Andrews), 129.
Leland, C. G., 312, 314.
Leroux, Pierre, 86.
Lewes, Mrs. (George Eliot), 219.
Lincoln, Abraham, 239, 261.
Linnæus, Charles von, 89, 92.
Literary London Twenty Years Ago, 271–297.
Literary Paris Twenty Years Ago, 298–325.
Literature and Oratory compared, 360.
Locke, John, 70.
Lodge, H. C., 352.
Long, J. D., 337, 354.
Longfellow, H. W., 12, 13, 33, 54, 55, 67, 95, 101, 102, 103, 168, 171, 176, 178, 179, 180, 189, 313, 314, 331, 345.
Longfellow, Samuel, 105.
Loring, E. G., 141.
Loring, G. B., 176.
L'Ouverture, Toussaint, 270.
Lovering, Joseph, 53, 54.
Lowell, Charles, 103.
Lowell, J. R., 24, 28, 37, 42, 53, 55, 67, 70, 75, 76, 77, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 103, 110, 118, 126, 128, 168, 170, 171, 173, 174, 176, 178, 179, 180, 182, 184, 186, 295.
Lowell, John, 5.
Lowell, Maria (White), 67, 75, 76, 77, 101.
Lynch, John, 235, 236.
Lyttelton, Lord, 289.

Macaulay, T. B., 170.
Macbeth, 265.
Mackay, Mr., 202.
Mackintosh, Sir James, 272.
Malot, Hector, 313.
Man of Ross, The, 5.
Mangual, Pedro, 22.
Mann, Horace, 142.
Marcou, M., 321.
Marshall, John, 15.
Martin, John, 210.
Martineau, Harriet, 126.
Mary, Queen, 35.
Mason, Charles, 54.
Maternus, a Roman poet, 361.
Mather, Cotton, 4.
Mather, Increase, 53.
May, S. J., 327.
May, Samuel, 146, 147.
Meikeljohn, J. M. D., 105.
Melusina, 42.
Mercutio, in "Romeo and Juliet," quoted, 263.
Mill, J. S., 101, 121, 122.
Millais, J. E., 332.
Miller, Joaquin, 289.
Mills, Harriet, 19.
Minot, Francis, 62.
Montaigne, Michael de, 181.
Montgomery, James, 143, 207, 208, 215, 231, 232, 233, 234, 246.
Moore, Miles, 213, 214.
Moore, Thomas, 304.
Morris, William, 289.
Morse, Jedediah, 6.
Morse, Royal, 70.
Motley, J. L., 53, 74, 169.
Mott, Lucretia, 327.
Moulton, Louise Chandler, 289.
Mucklewrath, Habakkuk, 219.
Munroe, G. H., 156.
Music, Influence of, on a child, 18.

Nemesis of Public Speaking, The, 355.
Newton, Mr., 280.
Newton, Sir Isaac, 92.
Nicolay, J. G., 219.
Niebuhr, B. G., 171.
Nordau, Max, 313.
North, Christopher, 169.
Northumberland, Duke of, 282.
Norton, Andrews, 12.
Norton, C. E., 39, 53, 336.

O'Brien, Fitzjames, 42.
O'Connor, W. D., 163.
Oken, Lorenz, 194.
On the Outskirts of Public Life, 326–361.

O'Shaughnessy, Arthur, 289.
Ossoli, see Fuller.
Owen, Richard, 194.

Palfrey, J. G., 12, 100, 103.
Palmer, Edward, 117.
Papanti, Lorenzo, 37.
Parker, F. E., 53, 62, 63, 64.
Parker, Theodore, 69, 97, 98, 100, 111, 112, 113, 130, 144, 148, 150, 155, 159, 161, 168, 170, 175, 184, 189, 217, 221, 327.
Parkman, Francis, 169, 183.
Parsons, Charles, 13, 24, 40.
Parsons, Theophilus, 122.
Parton, James, 301.
Paul, Apostle, 217.
Peabody, A. P., 5, 53, 63.
Peabody, Elizabeth, 86, 87, 173.
Peirce, Benjamin, 17, 49, 50, 51, 52.
Pericles, 112.
Period of the Newness, The, 69–99.
Perkins, C. C., 20, 66, 124.
Perkins, H. C., 194.
Perkins, S. G., 80, 81, 124.
Perkins, S. H., 79, 80, 83, 84.
Perkins, T. H., 80.
Perry, Mrs., 315.
Peter, Mrs., 17.
Petrarca, Francisco, 76.
Philip of Macedon, 126, 131.
Phillips & Sampson, 176.
Phillips, W. A., 207.
Phillips, Wendell, 53, 97, 121, 145, 148, 149, 150, 159, 240. 242, 243, 244, 297, 327, 328, 329, 333, 357.
Pickering, Arthur, 85.
Pierce, A. L., 125.
Pierce, John, 45.
Pike, Mr., 233.
Pillsbury, Parker, 327.
Pinckney, C. C., 13.
Plato, 101, 158, 181.
Plunkett, Sergeant, 345.
Plutarch, 15, 57, 171.
Pollock, Sir Frederick, 280, 281, 297.
Pollock, Lady, 280, 292.
Pope, Alexander, 1, 5.
Pottawatomie Massacre, The, approved in Kansas, 207.
Poverty, compensations of, 359.
Pratt, Dexter, 12.
Pratt, Rowena, 12.
Precocity, perils of, 68.
Preston, Colonel, 206.
Prescott, W. H., 82.
Prohibitory Laws, 120.
Proudhon, P. J., 364.
Provincialism, advantages of, for children, 3.
Putnam, Mary Lowell, 173.
Puttenham, George, 95.
Pythagoras, 158.

Quincy, Edmund, 178, 179, 244.
Quincy, Josiah, 56, 71.
Quintilian, 360.

Rabelais, Francis, 181.
Rainsford, W. S., 98.
Raynal, W. T. F., 15.
Redpath, James, 206, 226.
Rees, Abraham, 31.
Reformer, the Rearing of a, 100–131.
Remond, C. L., 174, 327.
Retzsch, Moritz, 79.
Revere, John, 54.
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 79.
Ribera, José, 295.
Rice, Mr., 233.
Rice, W. W., 164.
Richard, King, 60.
Richardson, James, 106.
Richter, J. P., 87, 90.
Rigual, Magin, 22.
Ripley, George, 189.
Ripley, Mrs. Sophia, 84.
Ritchie, Anne Thackeray, 292.
Ritter, J. W., 92.
Rivers, Prince, 255.
Rob Roy, 36, 214.
Robinson, Charles, 206, 207, 208, 209.
Robinson, Rowland, 115.
Roelker, Bernard, 55.
Rogers, Seth, 265.
Rollins, E. W., 60.
Roosevelt, Theodore, 345.
Rosello, Victoriano, 22.
Rossetti, William, 288.
Rossetti, Mrs., 289.
Rousseau, J. J., 316, 317, 318, 320.
Rückert, Friedrich, 101.
Rupert, Prince, 203.
Russell, W. E., 353.
Russell, Thomas, 226.
Russell, William, 21.
Russell, Lord William, 282.
Rust, J. D., 261, 262.

Saladin, 60, 301.
Sales, Francis, 55.
Saltoun, Fletcher of, 183.
Sanborn, F. B., 173, 215, 217, 218, 221, 222, 224, 225.

Sand, George, 77.
Savage, James, 224.
Saxton, Rufus, 248, 251, 252, 253, 256, 257, 265.
Schelling, F. W. J., 102.
Schnetzler, August, 89.
Scholar in politics, the, no prejudice against, 336.
Schramm, Herr von, 120.
Schubert, G. H. von, 86.
Scott, Sir Walter, 16, 132, 133, 219, 272, 276.
Seamans, Mr., 233.
Sedgwick, Charles, 60.
Selden, John, 359.
Sewall, S. E., 175.
Sewall, Samuel, 122.
Seward, W. H., 238, 239.
Shadrach (a slave), 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 142.
Shairp, Principal, 277.
Shakespeare, William, 64, 287, 294.
Shaw, R. G., 256.
Shimmin, C. F., 60.
Siddons, Mrs., 266.
Sidney, Sir Philip, 258.
Sims, Thomas, 131, 142, 143, 144, 146.
Sismondi, J. C. L. S. de, 92.
"Sisterhood of Reforms," the, 119.
Sivret, Mrs., 251.
Skimpole, Harold, 117.
Smalley, G. W., 240, 312.
Smith, Gerrit, 218.
Smith, H. W., 64.
Smith, T. C. H., 62.
Social feeling in Cambridge, 71.
Somerville, Mrs., 17.
Soule, Silas, 233.
Spanish school-boys, 22.
Sparks, Jared, 16, 56, 58.
Spencer, Herbert, 272.
Spenser, Edmund, 11, 28.
Spinoza, Benedict, 360.
Spofford, Harriet (Prescott), 129, 130, 177, 178, 179.
Sprague, A. B. R., 250.
Spring, L. W., 207.
Spring, Mrs. Rebecca, 230.
Spuller, M., 300.
Stackpole, J. L., 74.
Stallknecht, F. S., 104.
Stearns, G. L., 215, 217, 218, 221, 222.
Steedman, Charles, 261.
Stevens, A. D., 229, 231.
Stevens, C. E., 157, 158.
Stewart, Dugald, 11.
Stillman, Mrs., 296.
Storrow, Ann (Appleton), 7, 9.
Storrow, Anne G., 7.
Storrow, S. E., 74.
Storrow, Thomas, 7, 8.
Story, Joseph, 47.
Story, W. W., 77.
Story, William, 19, 22, 28.
Story family, the, 75.
Stowe, C. E., 139, 178, 179, 180.
Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 213.
Stowell, Martin, 147, 148, 149, 151, 153, 156, 157, 191, 198, 215.
Straub, Mr., 209.
Straub, Miss, 209.
Strauss, D. F., 101.
Stuart, Gilbert, 280.
Sullivan, J. L., 263.
Sumner, Charles, 53, 125, 146, 175, 196, 267.
Suttle, C. F., 148.
Swift, J. L., 151.
Swinburne, A. C., 289.
Swiveller, Dick, 30.

Tacitus, C. C., 360.
Tadema, Alma, 289.
Talandier, M., 304, 305, 306, 309, 310.
Taney, R. B., 238.
Tappan, S. F., 204, 215.
Taylor, Bayard, 108, 293.
Taylor, Henry, 29.
Taylor, Tom, 312.
Tennyson, Alfred, 67, 272, 287, 291, 292, 294, 295, 296, 314.
Thackeray, W. M., 187, 313.
Thaxter, Celia, 67.
Thaxter, L. L., 66, 67, 76, 94.
Thaxter, Roland, 67.
Thaxter family, the, 75.
Thayer and Eldridge, 230.
Thérèse, Madame, 320.
Thomas, C. G., 91.
Thompson, William, 198.
Thoreau, Miss, 170.
Thoreau, H. D., 25, 53, 78, 91, 92, 114, 169, 170, 181, 279, 360.
Ticknor, George, 12, 15, 49, 189.
Ticknor, W. D., 176.
Ticknor & Fields, 183.
Tidd, C. P., 228, 229.
Todd, Francis, 127.
Tolstoi, Count Leo, 315.
Torrey, H. W., 53, 58.
Tourguéneff (or Turgénev), I. S., 313, 314.
Town and Country Club, the, 172.
Transcendentalism, 69.

Transcendentalists, the, 114.
Trenck, Baron, 23.
Trollope, Anthony, 287.
Trowbridge, C. T., 262.
Tubman, Harriet, 328.
Tuckerman, Edward, 104.
Tuckerman family, the, 75.
Tukey, Marshal, 161.
Turpin, Richard, 161.
Tyndall, John, 272, 289.

Underwood, F. H., 176, 178, 182.
Ursuline Convent, Burning of the, 34.
Usher, R. G., 158.

Valentine, in "Two Gentlemen of Verona," quoted, 271.
Vanderbilt, Commodore, 175.
Van der Velde, Willem, 79.
Van Tromp, Admiral, 103.
Venable, Mr., 280.
Very, Jones, 54.
Village Blacksmith, the, 12.
Virgil, 337.
Vigilance Committee, the, 139, 145.
Voltaire, F. M. A. de, 298, 300, 301, 302, 303, 317, 321.

Walker, Captain, 206.
Walker, F. A., 26.
Walker, James, 56, 110.
Walpole, Horace, 280.
Ward, G. C., 176.
Ward, S. G., 176, 246.
Ware, George, 25.
Ware, Henry, 138.
Ware, Thornton, 29.
Ware family, the, 180.
Washington, George, 16.
Wasson, D. A., 112, 169.
Watkins, W. I., 217.
Watson, Marston, 78.
Webb, Seth, 157.
Webster, Daniel, 82, 136, 297.
Webster, J. W., 27.
Weiss, John, 103, 169.
Weld, S. M., 78.
Weller, Sam, 334.
Wells, W. H., 129.
Wells, William, 19, 20, 21.
Wendell, Barrett, 52.
Wentworth, Amy, 8.
Weyman, Stanley, 29.
Whewell, William, 92, 101.
Whipple, E. P., 170, 176.
White, A. D., 312.
White, Blanco, 183.
White, William, 126.
White fugitive slaves, 146.
Whitman, Walt, 230, 231, 289.
Whittier, J. G., 8, 111, 128, 132, 133, 134, 135, 168, 171, 178, 179, 180, 185, 237.
Whittier, Elizabeth, 133, 134.
Wightman, Mayor, 244.
Wilberforce, William, 327.
Wilder, S. V. S., 10.
Willis, Mr., 233.
Willis, N. P., 95, 271.
Wilson, Billy, 231.
Wimpffen, General, 324.
Wines, E. C., 310.
Winkelried, Arnold, 154.
Winnemucca, Sarah, 87.
Winthrop, R. C., 53.
Winthrop, Theodore, 107.
Wise, H. A., 224, 225.
Woman's Rights Movement, 120.
Woman Suffrage, 121.
Woodward, Rufus, 62.
Wordsworth, William, 69, 194, 272, 294, 338.
Wright, H. C., 113.
Wyman, J C., 176, 178.

Xanthus, 112.

Zaccone, M., 313.
Zamacois, Eduardo, 295.

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